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CAMBRIDGE SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMERCE SOUTHERN INDIA, 1500–1650

In *The political economy of commerce: southern India, 1500–1650* Sanjay Subrahmanyam explores the relationship between long distance trade and the economic and political structure of southern India in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He questions the more traditional views that external demand was the force behind pre-colonial Indian economic growth or that external trade was insignificant in quantitative and qualitative terms compared with the vastness of the internal economy. Instead, Dr Subrahmanyam authoritatively demonstrates the interaction between south Indian developments and larger international processes within certain economic institutions – most notably the network of marketing villages, great coastal emporia and operations of revenue-farmers and 'portfolio capitalists'.

This book is based on extensive and previously unused Portuguese and Dutch archival sources. Its secondary theme is to explore the relationship between the documentation used and the context within which it was generated, thus illuminating how Europeans and Asians reacted to one another.

The political economy of commerce: southern India, 1500–1650 makes an important contribution to pre-colonial economic history of India as well as to the understanding of the social and political processes of the period. It will be widely read by students and specialists of economic history and south Asian studies.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam is Reader in Economics at the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. He has published numerous articles on Asian history.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMERCE SOUTHERN INDIA 1500–1650

SANJAY SUBRAHMANYAM

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PREFACE

Many debts have been accumulated over the last six years, which this preface makes no pretence of repaying. This book is based in large measure on a doctoral thesis, submitted to the University of Delhi in 1986. In the course of writing it, and in collecting the documentary material on which it is based, I have received a good deal of encouragement from many (but, alas, not all!) of the scholars whom I have consulted, whether personally or through correspondence. It would not be possible to list all those who have helped me in one way or the other, lest this prefatory note become as long as the text itself. I shall content myself therefore with recording my more important debts, and hope that the others will consider themselves most warmly thanked.

I should begin perhaps by thanking the staff of the archives and libraries where I have worked: in particular, the Vidya Jyoti Library, Delhi, the Historical Archives, Panaji (Goa), the Algemeen Rijksarchief, and the Koninklijk Bibliotheek in the Hague, the British Museum Manuscript Section in London, the Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Distrital at Évora, the Biblioteca da Ajuda, Biblioteca Nacional, Torre do Tombo, and the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino at Lisbon. In particular, I owe a debt to the late Dr M.E. van Opstal, who was of immense help while I was at the Hague archives.

In the course of my archival research, I have also been privileged to receive the help of Shri R. Gopal at Panaji, Dr George Winius at Leiden, and Jan Wicher van Heerde at Lisbon, which I would like to acknowledge. While at the Hague, V.B. Gupta provided moral support, and kept me from flying too many kites.

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Hayat Bouwman and Ada Lindeijer (in particular the latter) were so kind as to spare time to teach me Dutch, and to help me to begin translating documentation in that language. Giacomo Zordan and

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Professor José Leal Ferreira (jr) of the School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, not only instructed me at great expenditure of time and energy in Portuguese, but has also provided intellectual support; to him I owe very special thanks.

Of other debts, I shall mention only a few. Several present and former colleagues and students at the Delhi School of Economics have provided comments on this work while it was in progress. Shri Bachi Ram of the Department of Geography cheerfully provided the maps. To Michael Pearson, whom I have not yet met, but who has in correspondence always provided lively and stimulating comments, I owe much thanks. Conversations with Chris Bayly and Frank Perlin have been very stimulating; I have also received illuminating comments and detailed suggestions during the process of writing and revision from several friends, among whom I should mention Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Ashin Das Gupta (who will, I am sure, disclaim all responsibility for the end-product), David Shulman, André Wink, Geoffrey Parker and particularly David Ludden. I am also grateful to Burton Stein for a detailed critique, which I have attempted to take account of – though probably not to his satisfaction. Joseph J. Brennig too has been extremely generous with his time, and has gone over a good deal of the ground (especially on south-eastern India) with me in discussions over the last five years.

Om Prakash, who introduced me in his classes to the problems I attempt to tackle here, has shown monumental patience and tolerance in dealing with me ever since – as this book demonstrates. Dharma Kumar has provided a strong dose of common sense, attempted to improve my style, and generally shown great indulgence, in the face of my uncouth habits.

In the last place but one, I should mention 'the man of thirty-one perfections' (he lacks but one, punctuality!) – Luís Filipe Thomaz, who was of the greatest help to me in Portugal. He has given generously of his own (often unpublished) work, and been free with his personal library, besides providing incisive comments on my work-in-progress.

Finally, this book owes a great deal to my family, and to my friends from outside the world of academics, none of whom will probably read it, but without whom it could not have been written.

Philadelphia
December 1987

ABBREVIATIONS

AHU	=	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon.
ANTT	=	Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon.
APO	=	Archivo Portuguez-Oriental (ed. Cunha Rivara).
AR	=	Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague.
BM	=	British Museum Manuscript Room.
BNL	=	Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa.
BP e AD	=	Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Distrital, Évora.
CAA	=	Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque.
CC	=	Corpo Cronológico.
CSL	=	Colecção de São Lourenço.
DPP	=	Documentação para a História das Missoês do Padroado Português do Oriente.
DR	=	Dagh-Register Batavia.
DRI	=	Documentos Remetidos da Índia.
DUP	=	Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa.
EFI	=	English Factories in India.
GM	=	Generale Missiven van Gouvereurs-Generaal en Raden.
HAG	=	Historical Archives, Panaji, Goa.
IESHR	=	The Indian Economic and Social History Review.
OB	=	Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren.
TTDI	=	Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanam Inscriptions.
VOC	=	Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie.

INTRODUCTION

There are many today who would doubt whether the year 1498 marks the beginning of a wholly new epoch in the history of Asia, what the late K.M. Panikkar liked to term the 'Vasco da Gama epoch'.[1] As a general proposition, it would be far more acceptable to state that 1500 marks a sharp break in historiography, and that this is in large measure on account of the new sources for the writing of Asian history that make themselves available from the early sixteenth century on. The impact of these sources is particularly marked on that part of economic history which deals with the exchange economy, which is to say the study of trade. From the period of Afonso de Albuquerque, the historian has available to him an unusually rich collection of documents generated by the Portuguese presence in Asia. These tend to peter out somewhat in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, only to revive in the last twenty years of the century.

The arrival of the northwest Europeans in Asia at the turn of the seventeenth century adds still further to this corpus of documentation. The archives of the trading Companies, in particular the Dutch and the English, when taken together with the scattered Portuguese documentation, represent a formidable body of data on trade and related questions. Further, in contrast to the evidence from the sixteenth century, which is sporadic and somewhat unevenly distributed over time, the Company documentation of the seventeenth century is a far more orderly set, and is particularly valuable because of the consistent and routine manner in which it is generated, and also because a relatively large proportion has survived. In contrast, the destruction of large sections of the Portuguese archives on the sixteenth century leaves us a picture which is partial and not necessarily a representative sample of the whole. It is important to

[1] See K.M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, London, 1959, which commences with the assertion, 'The 450 years which began with the arrival of Vasco da Gama in Calicut (in 1498), and ended with the withdrawal of British forces from India in 1947 and of European navies from China in 1949, constitute a clearly marked epoch of history' (p. 13).

note too that on certain questions where the Portuguese documentation tells us very little – such as the history of prices in Asia – the Company archives are far more informative.

In the period prior to 1500, the writing of the history of the exchange economy rests in large measure on travellers' accounts, administrative manuals, contemporary memoirs, inscriptions and the like. These highly stylised sources, written more often than not in a self-conscious manner, are characterised by a rather different perspective from that of the European documentation discussed above. The problem of reconciling the perspectives of the former and the latter is thus a central problem in studying changes over a long term in the commercial world of Asia, whether treated in whole or part.

In the present study, of southern India from the early sixteenth to the mid seventeenth century, the sources that have been used largely restrict themselves to one broad category: the sources of the Europeans who arrived in Asia after 1500. In fact, for this period, the inscriptional evidence conventionally used by historians of southern India begins to run thin, so that the central place of the European sources is more or less indubitable. But it is equally beyond doubt that these sources carry with them certain concerns, and focus on some areas to the exclusion of others. Thus, while there is much information to be had on the exchange economy of the coastal plains, the interior of the peninsula was in the period of far less concern to the entities which generated these documents. Indeed, the earliest detailed European evidence on this aspect of the interior of southern India comes from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the English East India Company acquired political control over that region.

The limitations of available documentation are however a given, and represent largely unalterable constraints within which one must operate. The choice that is available is that of the questions one wishes to put to these sources. A study of the historiography of late pre-colonial Indian society and economy (which is to say of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries) shows the dominance of one particular issue: of the 'potentialities of capitalistic development' in the socio-economic formations of the time. The question is of necessity counterfactual, and the parameter that is manipulated is colonial rule. Thus, the issue when starkly posed is of whether the Indian sub-continent was, in part or whole, moving in the direction of a 'modern' capitalist framework when the colonial episode intervened. It should be stressed that the question is *necessarily*

counterfactual, since in reality we know that industrial capitalism, as well as capitalist agriculture on a widespread basis are to be found only after the late nineteenth century.

While the issue (or question) is unique, answers have been diverse, and have followed two broad strands. Irfan Habib, examining the question for Mughal India, argues that no such transformation was imminent, and that the economy of northern India as late as the eighteenth century showed no signs of moving in this direction.[2] His work was deliberately counterposed to that of Soviet scholars, in particular V. Pavlov and A.I. Chicherov. The latter's work, in sharp contrast to Habib's essay cited above, concluded that on the eve of colonial rule 'qualitatively new forms seem to have emerged in the economic structure of the handicrafts, agriculture and trade.'[3] He underlined the growing subordination of production to mercantile capital, and asserts that India was 'approaching the beginning of the manufactory stage in the development of capitalism within the framework of her generally feudal economy'. This was however not to be as the colonial stranglehold destroyed 'a large, if not the main, part of the nascent bourgeois elements ... by colonial subjugation and plunder.'[4]

The tyranny of the 'potentialities' issue is such that no other general issue of significance appears to survive in the literature of the period. The few exceptions to this rule that one encounters in recent literature, such as the writings of Frank Perlin, remain speculative as well as tenative in character, and are yet to be incorporated in an adequate fashion into the mainstream of writings on the pre-colonial economy and society of India.[5] At the outset of this study, it is necessary to stress that the 'potentialities' framework – though still commonly encountered in the literature – is not the one adopted here. This is fundamentally on methodological grounds. First, if one accepts the counterfactual, one accepts too a viewpoint which suggests that the colonial episode interrupted an organic process which was headed in another direction. Such a view is arbitrary, and

[2] Irfan Habib, 'Potentialities of capitalistic development in the economy of Mughal India', *The Journal of Economic History*, Volume XXIX (1) 1969, pp. 32–78.

[3] A.I Chicherov, *India: Economic Development in the 16th-18th Centuries*, Moscow, 1971, p. 230. Also see V. Pavlov, *Historical Premises for India's Transition to Capitalism*, Moscow, 1978.

[4] Chicherov, *India: Economic Development*, p. 237.

[5] Cf. Frank Perlin, 'Proto-industrialization and pre-colonial south Asia', *Past and Present*, Volume 98, 1983, pp. 30–95; also Perlin, 'Money-use in late pre-colonial India and the international trade in currency media', in J.F. Richards, ed., *Imperial Monetary System of Mughal India*, Delhi, 1987, pp. 232–373.

leads in turn to the false dichotomy that has come to characterise much recent literature, of continuity versus change between the pre-colonial and colonial economies. Secondly, and equally important, is that a counterfactual must, in order to be meaningful, consist of the controlled manipulation of a carefully defined set of variables. If the parameters that are changed are of gross dimensions, the alternative solutions generated would be highly diverse, and one has no means of choosing between them. In such an event, Tapan Raychaudhuri's suggestion that – in the absence of colonial rule – Gujarat, Coromandel, Malabar and Bengal would have become capitalist enclaves is as implausible or plausible as any.[6] In brief then, the counterfactual has too many imponderables to be at all useful.

The alternative strategy is to consider the *actual* place of trade in the regional economy, and to seek to answer some undoubtedly significant questions, namely of the importance of trade, demographic changes and technological and institutional modifications in the processes of the economy and society under consideration.[7] Where trade itself is concerned, several recent writings underline that commercial expansion in the period from roughly 1500 to 1750 was part of a broader conjuncture involving a diversity of economic and political processes, on account of which India came to be caught up in a broader pre-modern world economy. Some writers such as John F. Richards stress the place of 'great institutions' such as the Mughal Empire and the East India Companies in this conjunctural process,[8]

[6] Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'A reinterpretation of nineteenth century Indian economic history?', in Dharma Kumar, ed., *The Indian Economy in the Nineteenth Century: A Symposium*, Delhi, 1969, pp. 77–100, especially pp. 79–80. Indeed, the problem of 'potentialities of capitalistic development' has obsessed several historiographies over the last decade and a half. The issue of *The Journal of Economic History* with Habib's study (note 2) also contained the papers of Subhi Y. Labib, 'Capitalism in medieval Islam', pp. 79–96, and Halil Inalcik, 'Capital formation in the Ottoman Empire', pp. 97–139, which address much the same issue in other non-European contexts. In the case of China, we have Yeh-chien Wang, 'The Sprouts of capitalism in China', in Frederic Wakeman, ed., *Ming and Qing Historical Studies in the People's Republic of China*, Berkeley, 1980, pp. 96–103, and Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, Stanford, 1973, esp. pp. 285–98, *passim;* most recently, a parallel study in the Indonesian context, Anthony Reid, 'The pre-colonial economy of Indonesia', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Volume XX (2), August 1984, pp. 151–67, esp. pp. 161–4.

[7] This approach is thus in sympathy with some recent writings on south Asia, notably David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, Princeton, 1985, and more particularly the essays of Frank Perlin cited in note 5 above.

[8] John F. Richards, 'Mughal state finance and the pre-modern world economy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Volume XXIII (2), 1981, pp. 285–308, especially p. 307–8. 'I have tried to establish schematically the conjuncture of forces – some familiar, some less so – which brought about a critical nexus between three of the largest, most complex, centralized organizations in the pre-modern

while others contrariwise attempt to trace far more basic interactions, of peasant societies in flux, growing money circulation, and a process of transformation which was subtle rather than glittering. A marked feature of some recent writings has been to see these changes, in which trade is thought to have a somehow profound role, as largely inchoate, and there is perceptible in these writings a certain reluctance to separate cause from effect, or even comment on the two.[9]

Earlier writings on trade, in contrast to the more recent essays, firmly placed stress on two causative functions of trade. First, there is the role of trade in promoting specific institutions, with the joint-stock company, and the manufactory or 'production under a single roof' being typical instances. Secondly, considerable stress was laid on the demand stimulus from trade, which it was argued led to the expansion of 'traditional' economies such as that of southern India. An early articulation of many of these ideas is to be found in Raychaudhuri's study on the Dutch Company in Coromandel in the seventeenth century. A typical instance of this manner of posing the problem occurs in the case of the advance system; Company trade is said to have led to the growth of cash advances, and to have promoted the subordination of the producer to mercantile capital.[10] In some of S. Arasaratnam's more recent work, it is even explicitly posited that prior to the arrival of the Companies, the Asian producer (specifically the textile weaver) had a precarious livelihood on account of the uncertain character of trade. It was only with the advent of European trade, he argues, that the textile producer ceases to be part-time cultivator and turns full time to his manufacturing occupation. Thus, they became 'price workers', employed on modified putting-out systems, with cash advanced instead of raw materials, finally emerging in the late eighteenth century (under the influence of colonial domination) as 'wage workers'.[11]

world [the English and Dutch Companies, the Mughal Empire]. The degree to which this nexus contributed to the profits and growth of all three of these organizations has not been generally recognized in the historical literature...'

9 For a recent example of the 'conjuncture' thesis, see C.A. Bayly, 'State and economy in India over seven hundred years', *The Economic History Review* (Second Series), Volume XXXVII (4), 1985.

10 T. Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605–1690: A Study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economies*, The Hague, 1962, pp. 214–15; also Chicherov, *India: Economic Development*, pp. 159–70. Perlin, 'Proto-industrialization', pp. 76–7, is somewhat uncritical in accepting this assertion.

11 See S. Arasaratnam, 'Weavers, merchants and the company: the handloom industry in southeastern India, 1750–1790', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (henceforth *IESHR*), Volume XVII (3), 1980, pp. 257–81.

Not all the innovations promoted by European trade (which clearly bears the brunt in these formulations of the 'modernising' role in respect of the 'traditional economies') caught on though, and a signal example stressed by both Raychaudhuri and Arasaratnam is the joint-stock companies which the Companies introduced on Coromandel to bring together the financial resources of their brokers. The fact that these joint stocks did not percolate to other parts of the economy is thought by them to have been a missed opportunity.[12]

The quantitative impact of Company trade, setting off a boom in the manufacturing economy, is another central theme of Raychaudhuri's work. This is contrasted specifically, once again, against erratic and relatively ill-organised trade by other entities. More recently, Om Prakash and K.N. Chaudhuri too have stressed the demand stimulus (in quantitative terms) of Dutch and English Company trade in terms remarkably reminiscent of export-led growth.[13] The theoretical and empirical underpinnings of this construct are only now beginning to be questioned; one of the purposes of the present study is to criticise the theoretical foundations of this formulation, and to offer an alternative model of how external commerce might have interacted with the producing economy to produce a certain set of outcomes.

Yet, it would be a less than satisfactory procedure to rest content with mining the European documentary sources of the period for 'facts' with which to test this or that hypothesis. We must consider the documentation itself, the circumstances under which it was generated, and what it says not only in respect of the world it describes, but concerning the writers themselves. An earlier generation of historians, functioning within the paradigm of 'European expansion', tended to take literally the judgements of those who wrote from within the European factory, ship, or trading post. Historians like Panikkar and O.K. Nambiar attempted for their part to rewrite history by turning these judgements over on their heads, producing the image of an age dominated by the unreasoning cruelty of

[12] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, pp. 147–8; S. Arasaratnam, 'Indian merchants and their trading methods, c. 1700', *IESHR*, Volume III (1), 1966, pp. 85–95. The limited value of the joint-stock companies issue is underlined in Joseph J. Brennig, 'Joint-stock companies of Coromandel', in B.B. Kling and M.N. Pearson, eds., *The Age of Partnership: Europeans in Asia Before Dominion*, Honolulu, 1979, pp. 71–96.

[13] K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660–1760*, Cambridge, 1978, p. 462, *passim*; Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630–1720*, Princeton, 1985.

expanding Europe.[14] Neither of these is a satisfactory procedure, and it is of some importance to understand the ambience within which this documentation was generated, which was neither one of 'western dominance', nor of a cordial 'partnership' between east and west. Instead, we shall argue, the age is probably best characterised as one of contained conflict, during which the power on sea of Europeans was systematically counterposed within a variety of contexts, to the power of Asian political structures.

It was also an age of high mortality and sudden death, where, in order to arrive in Asia from Europe, the European observers whose evidence we use had to pass nearly half a year in vessels where 'even when the weather remained fair, half the ship's complement might nevertheless perish'.[15] And once in Asia, hasty generalisations, which served to feed one's prejudices of the moment, were frequently made. The Florentine Piero Strozzi, was willing in 1510 to write of the Muslim merchants of Goa, 'We believe ourselves to be the most astute men that one can encounter, and the people here surpass us in everything. And there are Moorish merchants worth 400,000 to 500,000 ducats. And they can do better calculations by memory than we can do with the pen. And they mock us, and it seems to me they are superior to us in countless things, save with sword in hand, which they cannot resist'.[16] But other contemporaries or near-contemporaries had equally strong, and widely divergent, opinions. The Jesuit Alessandro Valignano, for his part, held Indians (as distinct from the 'white races' of China and Japan) to be little better than 'brute beasts', adding that 'a trait common to all these people is a lack of distinction and talent ... they are born to serve rather than command'.[17] This comment, made in 1577, was revised a few years later, when he declared the Japanese for their part to be 'the most dissembling and insincere people to be found anywhere'. Besides these, there were other widely held stereotypical beliefs – such as that the Burmese allowed clothes to rot and turn mouldy on their persons

[14] Cf. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese, 1500–1663*. Bombay, 1929; O.K. Nambiar, *The Kunjalis – Admirals of Calicut*, Bombay, 1963.

[15] Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, New York, 1984, p. 67, and references therein; also George Masselman, *The Cradle of Colonialism*, New Haven, 1963, for the voyage on Dutch vessels.

[16] Cf. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, '"Um bom homen de tratar": Piero Strozzi, a Florentine in Portuguese Asia, 1510–1522', *Journal of European Economic History*, Volume XVI (3), 1987.

[17] Spence, *Matteo Ricci*, pp. 41–2; on Valignano, also see Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Volume I (The century of discovery), Chicago, 1965, pp. 258–60, *passim*.

rather than take them off, that Persians were rude, overbearing and 'a nation haughty and self-regarding, beyond all other Indian nations', and that the banyans (*vanias*) were 'the most crafty and cunning nation in India, experts in knavery, marvellously fluent ... they are as exceedingly importunate and shameless as it is possible to describe'.[18]

These examples, chosen at random from a wide variety that one can identify, are often dismissed in the literature simply by declaring that a certain ethnocentricism pervades the European documentation of the epoch, or that the documents must be 'cleansed' of this veneer before one may gain access to the facts. But the veneer *itself* is of significance, and reveals to us a good deal about the persons who left behind their testimony, as well as about the circumstances under which this testimony was generated. Any exercise in using European documentation from the 'Age of Expansion' is thus of necessity an exercise in the history of mentalities, and, without an insight into the minds of our witnesses, we should understand very little of the period under consideration.[19]

This then forms the second, subsidiary, theme of this book, which will run parallel to the one already stated. Thus, on the one hand, the ebb and flow of trade, over land, along the coast, and across the oceans, will be traced, and linked to broader developments in the political economy of southern India between about 1500 and 1650; on the other hand, the relationship between the documentation used and the context within which it was generated will be examined, to comprehend how Europeans and Asians reacted to one another in this, still imperfectly understood, age. The exercise must begin however by a definition of the stage, and a summing up of received wisdom, and it is this task that the first chapter addresses.

18 On Burma, see António Bocarro's, 'Livro das Plantas', in A.B. de Bragança Pereira ed., *Arquivo Português Oriental* (n.s), Tomo IV Volume II, Parte II, Goa, 1938; for the other comments, the 'Anonymous relation', attributable to Pieter Gilliesz van Ravesteyn, in W.H. Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, London, 1931, pp. 78, 82.

19 The 'factual' approach adopted, for instance, in Lach's *Asia in the Making of Europe*, is thus of limited utility; nowhere is this clearer than in reading sixteenth century accounts such as that of Fernão Mendes Pinto, on whom see Lach, pp. 530–2, *passim*.

1

The political economy of southern India, 1500–1650: preliminary remarks

The geographical setting

Peninsular India is dominated by a massive triangular plateau, with its apex to the south, which extends down its centre, beginning from the Vindhya mountains in the north, and extending as far as the tip of the peninsula in a semi-broken form. The Deccan plateau as it is called thus forms the spine of the region here termed south India, and is bordered on either side by strips of low-lying land, the coastal plains. These coastal strips are separated from the elevated flatland of the plateau in the interior by mountain ranges of great antiquity, respectively termed the eastern and western Ghats. Both the ranges are naturally more precipitous in their descent on the low-lying coastal plains than on the interior plateau, given the higher elevation of the interior region; however, the western Ghats are more formidable as a barrier than their eastern counterparts, both in terms of elevation, and in the sheer acuteness of their descent to the coastal plain. Further, the western range preserves a high degree of continuity whereas the hills of the eastern Ghats are not merely more gentle but more broken, with access to the interior from the plain thus being far freer in the east than from the west. Between these two ranges, the interior plateau slopes from the north-west to the south-east, as a consequence determining the general direction of flow of all the major peninsular rivers. Most of these begin to the east of the western Ghats, and flow eastward across the plateau to emerge from the eastern Ghats on to the Coromandel plain, eventually voiding their waters into the Bay of Bengal. Several of these cross-peninsular rivers are centres of major natural drainage systems, the more important of these being the Krishna and Godavari to the north of the region and the Kaveri to the south. Some of the other rivers such as the Tamraparani and the Vaigai to the extreme south, and the Vellar, Ponnaiyar, Palar and Pennar are also not inconsiderable, whether seen in terms of sheer size or of their economic importance.[1]

[1] For a broad discussion of regional geography, see *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford, 1907–9, Provincial Series, Madras, 2 Volumes, as also O.H.K. Spate and

It has frequently been pointed out in the past that the major river valleys and deltas (in particular those of the Kaveri and the Krishna-Godavari) were the sites of early and persistent settlement and of the civilisation based on settled agriculture, which emerged very early in the south Indian region.[2] While a cursory examination of the drainage map of the southern reaches of the peninsula suggests a region honeycombed with water channels, many of these remain dry or are mere trickles for the greater part of the year. Thus, the region was characterised by a high degree of skewness in the relative distribution of water availability in different sub-sections, a factor that goes a long way towards explaining the highly uneven distribution of population across the region in the period, as we shall discuss ahead. In contrast to an interior largely characterised by an agrarian economy better described as hardy than lush, the two sets of regions that were relatively well-endowed naturally were the deltas and river valleys extending inland from the Coromandel plain, and the western coastal strip. Of the two coastal plains, the western lowlands are far more narrow, but are on the average also more productive agriculturally than those of the east. Between 30 and 80 kilometres in breadth, the coastal plain of the west from a point of extreme narrowness around Karwar (15° N), becomes progressively broader to the south, as one moves from north Kanara to south Kanara and Malabar. Running alongside the coastal plain and providing an impressive and almost unbroken backdrop is the considerable barrier of the western Ghats. This chain is about 4,000 feet in height in the Kanara region, but rises to as much as 8,500 feet farther south in the Nilgiris. Immediately following that, there is the only major gap in this chain, the Palaghat gap of some 30 kilometres width. This gap offers an important channel of access to the western coastal strip from the interior – in particular to the Tanjavur and Madurai regions. Other smaller passes in the Kanara stretch of the Ghats enabled the region of the interior to have access to the maritime trade carried on from the Kanara ports, but these were scarcely of the physical magnitude of the Palaghat channel. Following this gap, the Ghats rise once again to a height of 8,800 feet, culminating at the end of the peninsula in Cape Comorin.

These Ghats were and are of crucial importance for the agrarian economy and – as a consequence—for the economy as a whole, being

A.T.A. Learmonth, *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography*, London, 1967, Chapter 1.

2. See Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Delhi, 1980, especially pp. 32–6.

as they were the fulcrum around which turned that most important event – the monsoon. From early June to mid September, the western seaboard receives extensive rain and it is in this period of three months that the coastal strip registers some 90 per cent of its annual precipitation. This rainfall is quite naturally far more torrential on the western side of the Ghats (the coastal strip) than on the flatland to the east of the chain, which falls in some measure in the rain shadow. Thus, while the coast receives 250 centimetres of rain annually, the Mysore plateau to the east receives barely 40 per cent of that on average. The contrast is even more marked as one proceeds further east to the real spine of the peninsula and the region that came to be known in the ninteenth century as the 'dry districts', a stretch extending from Kurnool, Cuddapah and Anantapur through Chittoor to Salem and Coimbatore, an area on the average receiving no more than 60 to 65 cm of rainfall a year, and frequently less.[3] This bout of rainfall, from roughly June to September, is the most important for the greater part of south India, not only because of its effect via direct precipitation, but because it provides the flow at source for the major peninsular rivers, which we have already noted mostly begin immediately on the eastern side of the western Ghats. But, in addition, the region receives a further bout of rainfall later in the year, from roughly late October to early January, this on account of the retreating, or north-east, monsoon. Once again, the benefits by way of direct precipitation are far from equitably distributed, with the central Coromandel plain being the major recipient, in a stretch extending from Lake Pulicat to the lower Kaveri delta. The central or spine region is thus poorly watered by both monsoons, some parts of it receiving the bulk of their annual rainfall from the south-west and others from the north-east monsoon. The unequal distribution of water available is best illustrated by pointing out that while almost the entire western coastal strip may be classified as 'wet', or abundantly supplied with water, six months a year, only two substantial regions on the east coast – the Kaveri and the Krishna-Godavari deltas – can boast of the same level of water availability.

Besides feeding the major river systems, the monsoon also feeds the very large number of minor rivers that flow westward from the western Ghats into the Arabian Sea, intersecting the coastal plain at

[3] *Imperial Gazetteer*, Provincial series, Madras, Volume I, pp. 130–1, Table III. For a brief sixteenth century discussion of the monsoon system, see the letter from Filippo Sassetti at Goa, to Bernardo Davanzati at Florence, dated 9 November 1585, in Ettore Marcucci, ed., *Lettere edite e inedite di Filippo Sassetti*, Florence, 1855, pp. 341–51.

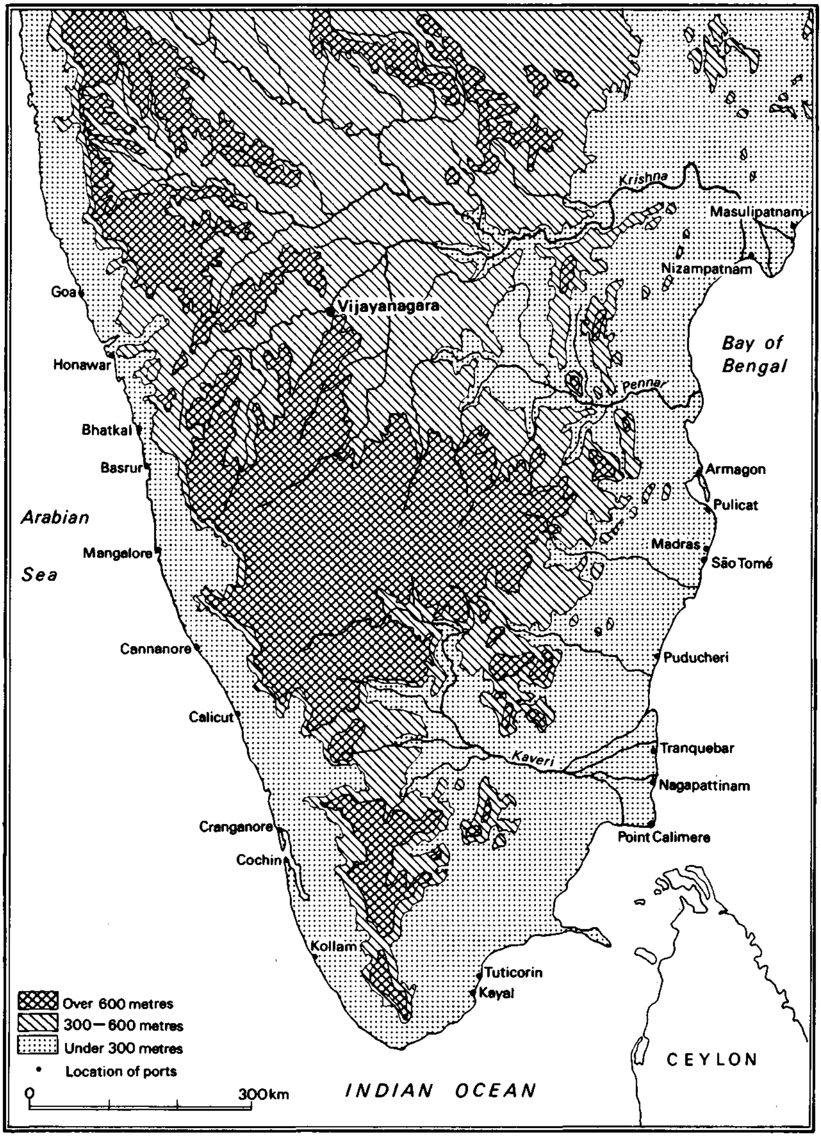
frequent intervals. These rivers, which in their sheer number compensate for the insignificance of their individual size, water the rich rice lands of Kanara and Malabar, besides forming numerous estuaries along the length of the coast.[4] The small river systems performed the useful function of arteries in the transport network of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, transporting, for instance, the pepper grown in the uplands of Kerala to the ports in small vessels.[5] The large rivers of the peninsula were less useful in this respect, since, with a few exceptions, most were not navigable upstream from the sea ports for beyond a few kilometres, save in small boats of shallow draught. This left much of the inland trade over the bulk of the peninsula (save on the two coastal strips) to be conducted on pack animals and headloads, since the terrain also often made the use of wheeled transport impracticable.[6] The location and frequency of rivers at least partly determined the location of ports in the period, and hence is worth at least a brief examination. It has frequently been remarked that for a coastline as long as that of southern India, there are very few port locations that can boast any particular virtues. Some were undoubtedly worse than the average in terms of the conveniences they offered, a notable example being São Tomé or Mylapur in central Coromandel, which had no river and hence forced ships' cargoes to be unloaded somewhat off shore into tiny rafts, which, battered by the surf (which is particularly violent on the Coromandel coast) would be beached off the settlement.[7] Of the ports on Coromandel, most (unlike São Tomé) were located up small rivers, creeks or inlets, but these afforded little protection in cyclonic weather or even in the violent returning monsoon. Besides, if the branch of the delta on which the port was located did shift, or silt up, or if there occurred sea-level changes over the medium term, ships might be forced to anchor either down river, or off the open coast, taking recourse to smaller

[4] Of these, the two most important are those of Mirjan in the north, and of Kundapur further south. In the latter estuary, as many as four rivers void their waters. For a discussion of Kanara in the period based on inscriptional evidence, see K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, Dharwar, 1970, pp. 279–91.

[5] A.R. Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire: Portuguese Trade in Southwest India in the Early Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, Mass., 1978, pp. 34–5.

[6] *Ibid.*; Francisco da Costa, 'Relatório sobre o trato de pimenta', in A. da Silva Rego, ed., *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa* (henceforth *DUP*), Volume III, Lisbon, 1963, p. 350.

[7] See the description by Cesare Federici in Olga Pinto, ed., *Viaggi di C. Federici e G. Balbi alle Indie Orientali*, Rome, 1962, p. 31. 'Spaventosa cosa è a chi non ha piu visto, l'imbarcare e sbarcar le mercantie e le persone a San Tomè, percioche è costa brava...' etc.



Map 1 Southern India: physical features and ports

vessels, to gain access to the port proper.[8] If Coromandel had a host of such problems, the west coast with its myriad rivers and estuaries was only a little better off. There were a few excellent port sites on this coast – of which two, Cochin and Cannanore, come immediately to mind – but the others, even major ports like Bhatkal, presented tricky navigational problems, forcing ships to pass through narrow channels to enter the harbour, and so on.[9] The west coast ports were free of at least one problem that plagued Coromandel: the current which seems to have forced ships to approach the coast off Tirumullaivasal and then navigate close to shore. This system of closely adhered to routes and channels would naturally make the trade and navigation more easy to control, creating as it did specific bottlenecks through which traffic needs must pass.[10] But as the example of São Tomé, or even that of Calicut, demonstrates the practical aspects (accessibility, ease of loading and unloading) while of undoubted importance, were often not the crucial or determining factors behind the siting or importance of ports. The relationship of ports to production centres, and inland markets, political regimes and a whole host of other reasons could prove as important in specific instances.

Population and patterns of settlement

Estimates of pre-modern populations are notoriously prone to error. For instance, even the most recent estimates of the world's population in the year 1600 are able to do no more than locate it within a range from 465 to 545 million. The population of Asia around the same date is estimated at 250 to 330 million.[11] When one turns to India, the estimates that we do have available to us today

[8] Many of these problems are described and discussed in J. Deloche, 'Geographical considerations in the localisation of ancient sea-ports of India', *IESHR*, Volume XX (4), 1983, pp. 439–48. Also see S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650–1740*, Delhi, 1986, pp. 7–33.

[9] See Diogo do Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década Quinta, edição Livraria Sam Carlos, Lisbon, 1974, Parte II, pp. 303–4.

[10] This is demonstrated for example in the sailing instructions, as well as in the descriptions of voyages made to Coromandel in the period. See for instance *Algemeen Rijksarchief*, The Hague (henceforth *AR*), Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren (henceforth OB), VOC. 1055, 'Memorie voor Willem Janssen ende Arent Maertssen... dato 15 Oct. 1609'; *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo*, Lisbon (henceforth *ANTT*), Documentos Remetidos da India, Livro 35, fls. 327–9.

[11] Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life* (translated Siân Reynolds), London, 1981, p. 42. The higher figures are those of Carr Saunders, the lower ones of a United Nations study. Also see Carlo M. Cipolla, *The Economic History of World Population*, New York, 1978, p. 116.

have changed very little in quality from those constructed by W.H. Moreland almost three-quarters of a century ago. To recapitulate, Moreland estimated the population of India as a whole (which is to say undivided India of the pre-1947 period) in around 1600 at 100 million, and that of southern India (including parts of modern Maharashtra but excluding Kerala) at 30 million. More recent estimates (based on statistics of debatable quality for Akbar's empire) suggest a higher figure for all of India, of between 115 and 140 million. The population of south India – if we take the area to be congruent to peninsular India below an imaginary line extending from Karwar on the west coast to Srikakulam on the east coast – may be estimated as a proportion (roughly 18 per cent) of this whole and may consequently be taken, following the writings of Irfan Habib and Shireen Moosvi, at between 22 and 30 million for the year 1600.[12] But, as we shall argue ahead, this estimate appears rather high; in fact, such a population, while small by todays standards, represents a large pre-modern one, perhaps over two-thirds of that of western Europe in the corresponding period, and roughly equal to the population of Imperial Russia as late as 1750. However, even if it were scaled down from this figure, there can be little doubt that south India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represented a sizeable population (and a qualitative measure of its size is the fact that most contemporary European observers were impressed by its apparent magnitude). This total population was not distributed evenly across the peninsula. It appears clear that the most populous areas around 1600 (when seen in terms of persons per square kilometre) were the two coastal strips (excluding the Fishery Coast of Tirunelveli) and the northern section of the region, around the Krishna-Tunghabadra *doab*. Next in terms of populousness was the south-western section of the plateau and the Mysore flatland (or *maidan*). The centre of the region, a long stretch extending from Coimbatore to Bellary, was thinly settled, extensively scrub and uncultivated waste. This is not to say that this area (including what was in the period termed Kongunad and Yelahankanad) was not populated by settled cultivators; it is merely being argued that the difference between the land to man ratio in these areas and the rest of the region, which in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was as high as 2:1, may have been somewhat higher in the period under consideration.[13] To put it somewhat

12 Irfan Habib, 'Population', in I. Habib and T. Raychaudhuri, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume I, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 163–71.

13 The calculation for the late 1870s is from the district gazetteers of Kurnool, Cudappah, Anantapur and Coimbatore, which are contrasted to the rest of Madras

differently, the long period from 1550 to 1850 saw not only the colonisation of this spine region as an absolute fact, even the relative proportion of the population settled therein probably increased.

One of the major themes of recent historiography on southern India in the period is the upsurge of migratory movement that the epoch witnesses. Although one encounters references to this aspect of change in the earlier works of, *inter alia*, Nilakanta Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya, it has been brought sharply into focus in recent times by Burton Stein.[14] The movement was far from random; there were three well-defined categories of geographical areas in south India: what might be termed source areas, destination areas and insulated areas. The migration took place principally along a north-south axis, with the major source area being the Telugu region. An earlier migratory burst, it is argued by J.F. Richards and others, saw the frontier being pushed inward from the Krishna-Godavari delta, with the spread of dry rice cultivation, based extensively on monsoon-fed tank irrigation.[15] In the period from the mid fifteenth century, there began an extensive movement of persons from the northern fringes of the region we have defined as south India to the Tamil speaking region. Far from being limited to a marginal crossing of linguistic boundaries, Telugu speakers, extending from warrior chieftains and cultivators to the chief mercantile castes (notably the Komattis, Balijas and Beri Chetties) spread themselves along the length of the spine of the peninsula all the way to the Tirunelveli region at the southern extremity of Tamilnadu. David Ludden in his study of the Tirunelveli region points to the concentration of these Telugu speakers, or *vadugas* as they are generally termed (meaning 'northerners'), in certain sub-areas of the district and to their role in pushing back the frontier of settled agriculture.[16] In this most southerly district, the proportion of such Telugu speakers in the late nineteenth century was as high as 14.5 per cent, for the most part migrants of the period from mid fifteenth to late eighteenth century. An examination of the evidence from the other districts of the Tamil

Presidency. For a discussion of differences in the land-man ratio of the interior (in particular Kongunad), and coast, see Brian J. Murton, 'Key people in the countryside: decision-makers in interior Tamilnadu in the late eighteenth century', *IESHR*, Volume X (2), 1973, pp. 157–80.

14 Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 36–68; David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, pp. 50–2.

15 A.B.Mukherji, 'Succession of cultural landscapes in Telengana Reddi villages', *Indian Geographical Journal*, Volume XXXIX, 1964, pp. 42–58; J.F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 3–4.

16 Ludden, *Peasant History*, pp. 52–3, *passim*.

region reveals significant proportions of Telugu migrants of the period in several of them; thus in the late nineteenth century, Salem district had a population which included some 15 per cent Telugus, Tiruchirapalli had 12.5 per cent, Madurai 17 per cent and Chingleput 13.9 per cent. On the other hand South Arcot (7.5 per cent) and Tanjavur (3 per cent) had far smaller proportions. Finally, the region with the highest proportion of *vadugas*, and this a district which had no common boundaries with the predominantly Telugu region, was Coimbatore, where as much as 23.2 per cent of the population were migrants from the Telugu region.[17] Firm numerical evidence from previous centuries is naturally not forthcoming, but a combination of oral history and a study of documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth century points to the importance of *vaduga* migration in that era. For instance, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century records of the Society of Jesus, the first set of Europeans systematically to penetrate the interior of south India, are replete with references to these 'badagas' in Madurai and Tirunelveli, as well as in other Tamil districts.[18]

We have noted that distance from the predominantly Telugu region bears no obvious inverse relationship with the extent of migration. Ludden and, following him, Stein suggest a simple and plausible explanation for the pattern of settlement: the migrants preferred to avoid the relatively densely settled areas with complex pre-existent social structures, preferring to push back the frontier of agriculture. Hence, they chose the drier interior over areas like Tanjavur and south Arcot. Further, it is suggested, the skills of the migrants were more as dry farmers, cultivating paddy as a dry crop, together with *cholam*, *cumbu* and other millets, so that the agrarian environment of the interior region, based as it was on tank or (as in the Kongu black soil area) well irrigation suited them.[19]

When one turns however to the question of why the migratory

[17] *Madras District Manuals* from the late nineteenth century give the detailed breakdown of population. For a detailed list of these manuals, see Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, p. 492.

[18] On the *vadugas* in sixteenth and seventeenth century Tamilnadu, see A. da Silva Rego, ed., *Documentação para a história das missões do padroado português do Oriente* (henceforth *DPP*), 12 Volumes, Lisbon, 1947–58, Volume V, pp. 21, 82, Volume VIII, pp. 263–3, 269–70, 307–24, 364–6, *passim*. Also Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação Anual das Coisas que fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus*, ed., Artur Viegas, 3 Volumes, Coimbra 1930–42, Volume I, pp. 318–20; Volume II, pp. 142–3, 329–33; Volume III, pp. 110–13, *passim*.

[19] Ludden, *Peasant History*, pp. 50–9. Also see his paper 'Ecological zones and the cultural economy of irrigation in Southern Tamilnadu', *South Asia* (New Series), Volume I (1), 1978, pp. 1–13.

movement took place at all, the literature has little to offer by way of explanation. The prevailing tendency appears to be to fall back on one of two modes of explanations: either one argues that the pressure of the Muslim invasions and of the Bahmani Sultanate (set up in the mid fourteenth century) was such as to force the inhabitants of the areas bordering on the 'Muslim' region to flee,[20] or it is argued that the movement broadly represented a more or less deliberate attempt by the Vijayanagara rulers to colonise the Tamil region, which they regarded as a milch-cow, yielding human and financial resources.[21] Both these explanations appear less than satisfactory. The first is in a sense a consequence of taking rather too seriously the 'Hindu' ideology of Vijayanagara as a state, contrasting this with the Islamic power to the north. There is abundant evidence available of the syncretic nature of the culture (in particular the popular culture, but even the elite culture) of the Bahmani Sultanate and its successors. Further, the political structure of these kingdoms necessitated compromise with Telugu *Nayakas*, and 'little kings' of various sorts. Thus, the politics being as much of compromise as of confrontation, there is little to support the portrayal created by historians of an earlier generation of a threatened peasantry 'fleeing the Muslim invader'.[22] As regards the notion that the migration was almost a deliberate act of policy, there is very little to support this either. While it is true that the warrior elites of fifteenth and sixteenth century Vijayanagara were largely drawn from Telugu stock, and appointed to head military campaigns to the southern reaches of the peninsula, there is no gainsaying the clearly autonomous nature of the migration, even if it was legitimised by sanction from central authority *ex post facto*.[23]

An alternative set of hypotheses might seek to link migration to

[20] Stein's own position in respect of this explanation is ambivalent. On the one hand (*Peasant State and Society*, p. 383), he emphasises the role of Vijayanagara rulers 'as protectors of Hindu culture', while on the other (*ibid.*, p. 392), arguing that 'those who bore the brunt of Vijayanagara military power were most often Hindu rulers, not Muslims'. The clearest recent articulation of the 'Muslim pressure' thesis of migratory movement is to be found in Christopher J. Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy, 1880–1985: The Tamilnad Countryside*, New Delhi 1984, pp. 40–51.

[21] Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy*, p. 37. Contrast this to Stein's view that resource flows were practically non-existent.

[22] Indeed, the 'troubled conditions' that are seen, in oral tradition, to precede migratory movements, are best interpreted as formulaic utterances, covering a variety of material circumstances. See *inter alia* Nicholas B. Dirks, 'The pasts of a Pālaiyakārar: the ethnohistory of a south Indian little King', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume XLI (4), 1982, pp. 655–84.

[23] The problem of migratory movements, in particular of Telugu warrior lineages and their clientele, is one of the themes treated in David D. Shulman, V.N. Rao and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Tamil Country under Telugu Kings*, forthcoming.

push and pull factors related to population expansion. There is some evidence to support the thesis of a steady upward trend in population in the Deccan from the mid fifteenth century on. This was clearly checked on account of natural disaster on at least two occasions, in the late 1540s and in the early 1630s, besides being hampered by a host of minor Acts of God, in particular disease epidemics, local scarcities, and crop failures. The inference of population increase is supported by the following logic: we note the substantial migratory movement argued by Stein and others, principally to areas where the soil was markedly inferior and less productive than in the existent core areas of settlement. Further, there is evidence that the areas from which the Telugu migrants originated did not as a result suffer a significant decrease in population density; in fact, contemporary observers from the early seventeenth century noted the regular and extensive cultivation of agricultural land in the source areas of these migrants.[24] It would therefore seem implausible that the migration merely represented a re-distribution of a static total population from one area of settlement to another; instead one could argue for a broad increase in regional population. Yet, for the clearing and settlement of the newer areas, as well as the more intensive use of already cultivated areas, a mere increase in population would not suffice. The question of the financing of this expansion remains a crucial element, and one that we shall discuss at greater length in a later chapter.

Ludden's study of Tirunelveli, which is near unique for the attention it devotes to population movement, points not only to the long-distance migration of the *vadugas* but to shorter distance movements as well.[25] These include the movement from southern Malabar to the Tirunelveli-Ramnad region of the Shanars (or Nadars) from an even earlier period, and is in consonance with the consensus among historians of Kerala of a growing population pressure on land from as early as the twelfth or thirteenth century.[26] We have already suggested that, in addition to the areas where migratory phenomena of substantial dimensions (both immigration and emigration) can be identified, there were regions insulated from these movements. The areas beyond the western Ghats represent such regions, notwithstanding some migration which did occur from southern Malabar to the southern Tamil region (as we

[24] See for example J.F. Richards, *Mughal Administration*, p. 25.
[25] Ludden, *Peasant History*, pp. 46–50.
[26] On population pressure in Kerala, see *inter alia*, K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *A Short History of Kerala*, Ernakulam, 1966, pp. 134–5.

have mentioned above) of Gaur Saraswats into and from Kanara, and so on. By and large, these regions remained immune to the general melee of population movement that characterised the broad period.[27] In the case of Kerala, this was in particular permitted by the pattern of trade, which enabled this region, already a rice-deficit area in the early sixteenth century, to support a population larger than that which could have been supported in the absence of trade.[28]

The broad structure of relative population density in the region has already been outlined, to the extent that the poor evidence base of the period permits. We may now turn briefly to the question of the pattern of settlement and settlement types observed in different parts of the region for the period. Considering first the agrarian economy and the structure of rural settlement, one may broadly discern two types of settlements in the south Indian landscape. On the east coast, in the great river deltas and valleys, one sees the dominance of nucleated settlements, with a residential area that was demarcated and separated from the cultivable land. This nucleus was a communal residential area in the sense that the houses of all residents – save the untouchables – were located in a knot. Since the untouchable settlement (of particular importance in the highly unequal and stratified structure typifying the great river deltas, such as that of the Kaveri) was a separate one, the nucleus was really a twin nucleus, rather than a unitary one. This village type was one encountered on the Coromandel plain, and was an idea of settlement transplanted to the inland (or spinal) regions with the pushing back of the agricultural frontier during the course of the period. It has been noted that, in contrast to the dominance of the *brahmadeya* settlement in the major river valleys and the deltas, with the corresponding high percentage of Brahmin village residents, and of bonded untouchable castes, the villages of the inland – colonised in the course of the long period of which the century 1550–1650 forms a part – were characterised by a higher proportion of the cultivating castes themselves.[29]

[27] Thus, population profiles for the area from the early nineteenth century show little evidence of immigrant populations, and those in evidence (e.g. the *navayats*) date from the first millenium A.D. Also see K.V. Ramesh, *History of Kanara*, and, on the Gaur Saraswats, Frank F. Conlon, *A Caste in a Changing World: The Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmins, 1700–1935*, Berkeley, 1977

[28] On rice imports into Malabar in the period, see for example M.L. Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, 2 Volumes, London, 1918 and 1921, Volume II, pp. 74–108; also see such records as *ANTT*, Fundo Antigo, No. 755, fls. 1–5.

[29] This emerges from the composition of population in the two regions, for which see Ludden, *Peasant History*, pp. 59–67; Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 394–6; and above all, Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy*, pp. 52–6.

In contrast to this settlement type, the pattern on the west coast, and in particular Kerala, was considerably different. Rather than the compact, nucleated settlement, the rural landscape was dominated by individual homesteads surrounded by fields, rather than a clearly demarcated communal residential area.[30] This pattern, the dominant one to the south of Mt. Eli, obtains somewhat less in the Kanara region, where *agraharas* and other nucleated settlements dominate.[31] Nonetheless, the density of population in Kanara, an immensely fertile and productive region, appears to have been less than in the river deltas of the Coromandel plain, with settlement too often being semi-compact and (increasingly as one approached the Ghats from the coast) of a hamleted character.

It is worth mentioning at least briefly that in addition to the above two types (the one characterising much of the Coromandel plain, the dry inland and the Mysore plateau, and the other the south-western reaches of the region) a third pattern of settlement existed concerning which we know very little. The pushing back of the frontier of settled agriculture, which we have discussed at some length, meant the displacement by the settled agriculturists of earlier peoples who had subsisted on hunting and gathering, as well as on shifting agriculture usually characterised as 'slash and burn' cultivation. Rather than a once and for all clearing of land, with the practise of fallowing or crop rotation on cultivable land, this form of agriculture meant the clearing of scrub and forest on a temporary basis; the land thus cleared would be cultivated until its nutrients were extensively exhausted, and would then be abandoned for a nearby patch of land again cleared on a temporary basis. This pattern of shifting rather than settled cultivation, hunting and gathering was practised by populations in the interior of the peninsula, in the lower reaches of the western Ghats, and in areas such as Ramnad and Madurai and Tirunelveli, where settled cultivation had not made substantial inroads even as late as the mid sixteenth century.[32] The frontier

30 See Eric J. Miller, 'Caste and territory in Malabar', *American Anthropologist*, Volume LVI, 1954, pp. 410–20.

31 The earliest detailed account we have of these areas is from F. Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the lands of Mysore, Kanara and Malabar*, 3 Volumes, Madras, 1908, Volume III. However, the character of land holding in the Kanara region is brought out clearly in such studies as K.G. Vasantha Madhava, 'Land control and caste structure in coastal Karnataka (1336–1600)', *Indica*, Volume XIX (1), 1982, pp. 17–30.

32 Ludden, *Peasant History*, pp. 81–3; also see S. Kathirvel, 'Portuguese colonial impact on agriculture and trade: the Tamil coast', in N.R. Ray, ed., *Western Colonial Policy*, Volume II, Calcutta, 1983, pp. 318–30. Also David Shulman, 'Of South Indian Bandits and Kings', *IESHR*, Volume XVII (3), 1980.

movement brought these populations (ethnically distinct from the mainstream of plains settled cultivators) into contact and conflict with the frontiersmen. Thus, the history of the period (written largely on the basis of the records left by the settled cultivators) is replete with hostile and uncomplimentary references to these peoples, even those among them who were absorbed over time into the fabric of plains society. An example of such a population are the Maravas, originally resident in the Ramnad region, and on being displaced and disturbed, spreading themselves over the Madurai-Tirunelveli region as well. This community is particularly notable for its loosely knit, segmentary structure of authority, as also for its ability to eventually translate this organisation into a quasi-state, ruled over by the Setupati of Ramnad, the Marava chieftain.[33] The expansion of the Udaiyar state of Mysore to the west (to the shadow of the western Ghats) brought them into conflict with similarly organised tribesmen, and here the conflict was less amicably resolved, with an open frontier of conflict that persisted into the mid eighteenth century.[34] Thus, through a variety of means (some more conflictual, some less so), the expansionary movement in the period brings with it a process of 'peasantisation', as marginal elements are absorbed into the fabric of plains society.

Before concluding this section, a comment is clearly in order on the nature and dimensions of the urban conglomerates in the region. Following the traditional categorisation used in this context, it would be useful to differentiate three ideal types, the administrative town, the trading centre (which would include port towns) and the religious centre. Particular urban centres might typically combine some or all of these features in their make-up. It is clear that, in the south India of the period, towns with a population of over 100,000 were extremely few in number.[35] Arguably, in fact, only three such centres can be identified: one is the city of Vijayanagara in the period before 1570, a city which from contemporary accounts, and from what remains of its expanse, contained in the city proper and suburbs

[33] On the Marava state, see S. Kathirvel, *History of the Maravas, 1700–1801*, Madurai, 1977; R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayakas of Madura*, Madras, 1924, pp. 244–5; also R. Sewell, *Lists of Inscriptions and Sketch of the Dynasties of Southern India*, Madras, 1884, pp. 227–30.

[34] See *Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa* (henceforth *BNL*) Fundo Geral, Códice 4179, 'Relação das couzas succedidas neste Reino do Maÿsur desde Mayo de 1724 athe Agosto de 1725', fls. 40–51v.

[35] In fact, Irfan Habib in his chapter 'Population,' *Cambridge Economic History*, Volume I, p. 171, lists only one such – Masulipatnam – but then the chapter is weighted heavily towards northern India.

a population of between 300,000 and 400,000.[36] From roughly the same period, that is around 1570, one can date the rise of the twin cities of Golconda and Bagnagar (earlier no more than a small fortress town). The cities, when treated together, evidently contained in the seventeenth century a population of upwards from 200,000 persons.[37] The third city one can mention in this category is the port city of Masulipatnam, which, from humble dimensions in the mid sixteenth century, came to have a population somewhat over 100,000 by the mid seventeenth century.[38]

Towns of a smaller order were more common. Provincial capitals such as Srirangapatnam, Madurai, Tanjavur, Velur and Senji, as well as well-developed emporia such as early sixteenth-century Pulicat, Bhatkal and Calicut may be thought to have had no less than 50,000 residents.[39] Temple towns such as Sringeri, Kanchipuram, Tirupati, Sravanabelagola had considerable fluctuations in their populations on a seasonal basis, and hence an estimate of residents has little relevance in such cases. Smaller still were the fortress towns and market centres such as Kondavidu, Kondapalli and Rajahmundry to the north-east, Penugonda, Kalahasti and Udayagiri farther south, and a whole host of port towns such as Basrur, Honawar, Cochin, Nagapattinam, Nizamapatnam, and seventeeth-century Pulicat. From a considerable early sixteenth-century population, the inhabitants of this last-mentioned port were estimated at slightly over

[36] The classic descriptions of Vijayanagara city are of course those of Domingos Paes and Fernão Nunes, published by David Lopes, *Chrónica dos Reis de Bisnaga*, Imprensa Nacional Lisbon, 1897, and somewhat imperfectly translated in Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire: Vijayanagara*, reprint New Delhi, 1962. Here Paes estimates the size of Vijayanagara at 100,000 houses. More recently, archeological work is under way, and will hopefully throw more light on the dimensions of the city and its resident population. For preliminary findings, see G. Michell, 'Vijayanagara: city of victory', *History Today*, Volume XXXII, 1982, pp 38–42; also M.S. Nagaraja Rao, *Vijayanagara, Progress of Research, 1979–1983*, Myşore, 1983, and J.M. Fritz, G. Michell and M.S.N. Rao, *Where Kings and Gods Meet: The Royal Centre at Vijayanagara, India*, Tucson, 1984.

[37] Shah Manzur Alam, 'The growth of Hyderabad city: a historical perspective', in *Studies in Indian Culture* (Ghulam Yazdani Commemoration Volume), Hyderabad, 1966. Also, more recently, Dharmendra Prasad, *Social and Cultural Geography of Hyderabad City: A Historical Perspective*, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 1–13, 27–47.

[38] The estimate by Dr John Fryer cited by Irfan Habib places the port's population at around 200,000. See Habib, 'Population', *CEHI*, Volume I, p. 171.

[39] Of course, detailed descriptions and estimates of population are available in very few of these cases. But see for example, H. Heras, 'The city of Jinji at the end of the 16th century,' *The Indian Antiquary*, Volume LIV, 1925, pp. 41–3; this is based on the account of Nicolau Pimenta, S.J., who visited Senji in about 1598, published in translation in *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes*, ed. Samuel Purchas, reprint, Glasgow, 1905, Volume X, pp. 205–22. Also see Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação Anual*, Volume I, pp. 315–20; Volume II, pp. 141–6, *passim*.

10,000 in the early seventeenth century, and this was really the order of magnitude of several of the other ports mentioned in the same category.[40]

Much has been made of the growth of *palaiyams* (or small fortified centres) in the period under consideration as a factor contributing to urban growth.[41] The treatment of these centres, comparable in fact to the secondary market towns of Skinner's China,[42] or to the *qasbahs* of the north Indian landscape, bring us in contact with a problem of the historiography; it is common enough to encounter in the literature the assertion that the proportion of urban population to total population declined in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, implying thereby that the proportion of the population resident in urban conglomerates in our period was probably somewhat higher than the 12–13 per cent of early nineteenth century Madras Presidency.[43] This raises the question of whether there is much meaning in attempting to define or estimate such a category as 'population resident in urban areas' in this period. It would appear not, seeing the difficulties attendant on any attempt to define an urban area in this period. There are loosely three methods that may be followed. One may attempt the use of Census categories defining urban areas as those above a certain threshold level of population. This would meet with the insuperable objection that the definition of the threshold itself is informed by the order of magnitude of the total population. A second possibility might be to see the question in medieval western European terms, where the juridical status (and hence the nomenclature) of urban centres was distinct; in sixteenth and seventeenth century Portugal, for example, the status of an urban centre termed a 'villa' would be inferior to that of one termed a 'cidade', with the privileges afforded to each also differing.[44]

A parallel in the south Indian case would be to distinguish centres

[40] See *AR*, OB, VOC. 1059, fl. 63v.

[41] See Burton Stein, 'Towns and cities: the far south', in *CEHI*, I, pp. 454–5.

[42] G. William Skinner, 'Marketing and social structure in China', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume XXIV, Nos. 2–4, 1964–5, pp. 3–43, *passim*.

[43] At a general level, this idea is propounded by Irfan Habib for early colonial India in his paper 'Studying a colonial economy – without perceiving colonialism', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XIX (3), 1985, pp. 364–8. It is however not borne out by recent studies of north India in the period, such as C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870*, Cambridge, 1983. If de-urbanisation is to be associated with early colonial rule, one assumes that protagonists of the thesis would locate the process for southern India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

[44] For examples of the privileges that went with with these terms (which were apparently derivative from Roman juridical usage) see *Biblioteca da Ajuda*, Lisbon,

termed *patnam*, *palaiyam* or *pettai* as urban centres; the results may however be problematic, since such centres often retain the same suffix even after losing the function on account of which it was acquired. A third possibility, following Skinner, would be to distinguish the urban centres from others by locating them in a hierarchy, a procedure that enables one to comment simultaneously on their character and functions. Since it is not possible to do this on a comprehensive basis with our present state of information, it seems that the meaning of 'urbanisation' needs to be thought through in a consistent fashion before commenting on any 'de-urbanisation' process that might have occurred. The growing use of the phrase 'rurban' to characterise many of these centres clearly shows the ambiguous nature and the difficulties in distinguishing a large village from a small town. These are themes we shall return to at greater length in subsequent chapters.[45]

The distribution of productive activity: some comments

Within the broad region that we have described, productive activities – whether agricultural or non-agricultural – were to at least some extent concentrated in specific pockets already by the beginning of the sixteenth century. The bulk of these activities, including manufacture, were however located in villages and rurban centres, and not concentrated in 'towns', however one should choose to define them. In the case of northern India too, this has emerged clearly enough from the detailed description of productive activity, locality by locality, in such works as Irfan Habib's *Atlas of Mughal India.*[46] In the instance of southern India, while an equivalent work does not exist to date, it is nonetheless possible to point to some of the more obvious elements of sub-regional specialisation, both at the beginning of the period and as a result of the processes of the period.

Turning first to agricultural production, we note that the dominant crop in the wet lands of both the Coromandel plain and the western

Códice 51-VII-14, fls. 1v–3, *passim.* Also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Trade and the Flag: the Portuguese in Nagapattinam, 1530–1658', in Dilip K. Basu, ed., *Colonial port cities in Asia: A Symposium*, forthcoming.

45 Perlin, 'Proto-industrialisation and pre-colonial south Asia'; Vijaya Ramaswamy, 'Artisans in Vijayanagara Society', *IESHR*, Volume XXII (4), 1985.

46 Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi, 1982. This contains at least some maps (for example 14A, 14B, 15A, 15B, 16A, 16B) which touch on south India, but these are based on such sketchy documentation, and are so inaccurate – for instance, pepper production located in the neighbourhood of Raybagh and in Tanjavur – as to limit their value.

coastal strip was rice. In the more lushly irrigated areas, there were two and even three crops a year. This often did not take the form of three sowings; for example, in the Tanjavur region, sowing was done only once – in June – but the seeds were typically of two varieties, the one maturing in four months, the other in seven, which thus had the effect of providing two harvests. Elsewhere, for example in the fertile lands of the Kanara coast, as many as three rice crops could be coaxed from the soil, with the best returns (and the finest quality rice) being in the *kartika* season harvest, sown in May and cut in October. As one proceeded from the coasts to the interior, however, rice cultivation survived in two forms: wet rice in the river valleys, and dry cultivation through the tank-fed irrigation of the interior, with an exception being the Kongunad area, where well irrigation was the norm. The drier regions of the interior could support very little by way of rice cultivation, and here the cultivation of millets was the norm, lessening risk in the event of a failure of the monsoons.

But, turning from rice and millets, we observe at least two other sets of crops in the regional economy. The one group consisted of 'plantation' crops, in particular pepper, but also cardamom, and ginger. The production of pepper, requiring as it did fairly stringent physical conditions, was restricted to the south-west of the region, and more specifically to the uplands of Kanara and Malabar. Production began in the south in the Venad region, to the interior of Kollam and Kayamkulam, and continued as far north as Gersoppa, almost at the southern limits of the Portuguese territory of Goa. Since the location of the pepper plantations was of necessity in the uplands, to prevent excessive water retention, there was no real competition for area between this crop and the other crop of importance in the Malabar and Kanara regions, namely rice. Of ginger and cardamom, less is known, whether one refers to the extent of production or to the exact sub-regions. We are aware however that, in the early sixteenth century, Kanara was already known as an extensive producer of both, as was Malabar.[47]

A second set of crops might be termed non-plantation commercial crops, and this group would include fairly disparate items such as cotton, indigo and sugarcane. We may note that the production of cotton was widespread in the drier regions of the peninsula, and certainly the crop was to be encountered in the Mysore region and on route from the ports of the Kanara coast to Vijayanagara. On the

[47] Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, 2nd Edition, 4 Volumes, Lisbon, 1981–4, Volume II, pp. 189, 213–14.

Coromandel plain, cotton was produced as well, but in limited quantities, both in the Krishna delta and further south, along the Chingleput and Arcot area, and finally to the extreme south in Tirunelveli.[48] The production of cotton was of particular importance for the Coromandel plain, since a substantial weaving population had to be supported, and there is little evidence of imports of any sizeable amounts of raw cotton into the regional economy until the second quarter of the seventeenth century.[49] Together with cotton, another non-food crop of importance, though its cultivation was far less widespread, was indigo. There is evidence of the cultivation of indigo in three separate areas. First, the Arcot region, in the neighbourhood of Devanampattinam and extending as far north as Pulicat.[50] The quality of this indigo was generally thought to be poor, and sufficient only to meet local demand from the textile industry, not worth the trouble of selling at distant markets. A second region was the Godavari delta, where we know of indigo cultivation in the Kakinada region, and farther to the south and west as well, in the vicinity of Palakollu. Neither of these can be compared either in the extent of production or in the quality of the product with the third region. This lay to the north of the river Krishna, in a broad band extending from Khammam to Eluru, and was in the early seventeenth century called either 'Palewanse' (i.e. Palvancha), or 'the land of the indigo' by foreign observers. The major centres for trade in indigo, where merchants trafficking in the commodity gathered in season, besides Palvancha itself, were Nagulvancha, south-east of Khammam, and Gollapudi, but other markets too existed in the vicinity.[51] A particularly interesting feature of indigo production in this period (the second decade of the seventeenth century) was that buyers vied to advance money to the cultivators, thus to secure their supplies after the major harvest of August, failing which they had to rest content with the October and December harvests, which were of progressively inferior grade.

48 N. Venkataramanayya, *Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar*, Madras, 1935, pp. 295–7; A. Appadorai, *Economic Conditions in Southern India, AD 1000–1500*, 2 Volumes, Madras, 1936, Volume I, pp. 182–3, 331–5, 429–31; Ludden, *Peasant History*, pp. 56–7, 59; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1094, fls. 98, 100-v, *passim*.

49 Joseph J. Brennig, 'The textile trade of 17th century northern Coromandel: a study of a pre-modern Asian export industry', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1975, pp. 229–39.

50 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1712, fls, 513–22; Pieter van Dam, *Beschrijvinge van de Oost-Indische Compagnie*, ed. F.W. Stapel, The Hague, 1932, Book II, Part II, pp. 192–201.

51 For a detailed description of indigo cultivation, and the distribution of producing centres, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1062, fls. 45v–46v.

In addition to cotton and indigo, one also remarks the production of other non-cereals, such as sugarcane. The production of sugarcane is to be observed in the Tanjavur and Arcot regions, and more particularly on the western coastal strip, in the vicinity of the Kanara port of Bhatkal.[52] In the latter location, the production was sufficient to support the export of good quality white sugar, which travelled as far as the Persian Gulf, already by the early years of the sixteenth century. In the course of the period, 1550 to 1650, a few New World crops too enter the region. It has been suggested by Moreland that maize was among these, but evidence remains inconclusive. A conspicuous introduction however was tobacco, which in about 1600 flourished in two limited areas: first, in the Tirunelveli region, and secondly in the Krishna-Godavari region, where, by all accounts, it was introduced late in the sixteenth century.[53] Another innovation was chilli, which seems to have made inroads into the Madurai-Tirunelveli area, but the spread both of this and of potatoes (which are to be encountered in north Coromandel early in the seventeenth century) are little documented to date. Finally, some mention should be made of fruits, both those already existent before 1500, and others (such as pineapples) whose cultivation in the Malabar region becomes significant only after the sixteenth century.

Turning from agricultural to non-agricultural activities, the most conspicuous of these was textile production, which is to say spinning, weaving, and related activities. While textile producers are likely to have existed all over the south Indian landscape, certain concentrated pockets are highly conspicuous. Of these, the major ones are of the Coromandel plain, stretching in a long arc from the Kaveri delta to the twin deltas of the north-east. Smaller concentrations obtain in some of the interior regions, such as Coimbatore, and we know of the production of textiles for long-distance trade in the Mysore region as well (from where they were transported to the Kanara ports), and in interior Andhra, between Hyderabad and Warangal. The concentration of textile producers in pockets meant that the production of cotton in their immediate vicinity was often insufficient to support their activities; hence, there was observed a symbiotic relationship

[52] On sugar production in Arcot, see N. Karashima, 'Nayaka rule in north and south Arcot districts in south India during the sixteenth century', *Acta Asiatica* (48), 1985, pp. 1–26, especially pp. 20–1; on the Kanara production, see Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I, pp. 187–9; also Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, Volume IV, pp. 115–18.

[53] See W.H. Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, London, 1931, p. 3 (Methwold's Relation), 'They have within few yeeres planted store of tobacco...'.

between the dominance of the coast in textile production, and the production of cotton in the dry interior.

When one proceeds from textiles to a consideration of other non-agricultural activities, such as the processing of agricultural products, these are often found to be supplementary sources of income for agriculturists. One thing stands out clearly though in the case of the weaving communities of Coromandel, and that is the full-time nature of their calling. These weavers were by no means part-time peasant agriculturists, who turned to manufacturing as a supplementary source of income. With the exception of a few 'coolie' weavers, employed on the looms of others, and some *pariah* weavers, who typically wove the lower counts of cloth, textile production was an activity that was not easily combined with the use of the plough. This would clearly obtain for those who worked with the finer textiles, and hence had to maintain their hands with a degree of care, but this did not preclude their having rights over land, which was rented out to other cultivators.[54] A further point of interest in respect of these textile producers relates to the seasonality of their work. We observe that, along the Coromandel coast, the annual agricultural cycle typically did not complement the labour demand cycle from weaving. The demand for textiles for export usually reached its peak in September and October, and demand from the domestic economy in October/November as well as in January. In areas such as Tanjavur these were also harvesting months, so that the notion of the two cycles – that of the agricultural calendar and of textile production – complementing one another is of far less relevance here than in the single crop economy of Europe. Of course, one might argue that, in the dry and hot seasons, textiles might well have been produced and stored for later sale; this however needs to be reconciled with evidence, from a later period, showing that, even after nineteenth-

[54] That weavers had rights on land already in the Vijayanagara period is established conclusively in recent writings such as Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India*, Delhi, 1985, pp. 48–52, *passim*. The absence of *operational* holdings is obvious from such records as *AR*, OB, VOC. 1511, fls. 1135–42, 1160–3. As late as the 1940s, it was remarked in the context of south India that weaving was almost wholly a full-time occupation. Thus, we have the following remark in B.V. Narayanaswami Naidu, *Report of the Court of Enquiry into Labour Conditions in the Handloom Industry* (Government of Madras), Madras, 1948, p. 6. 'It has been long believed that weaving may be pursued as a subsidiary occupation; it is an erroneous belief, except for a very small number of scheduled caste-weavers in certain places who mainly pursue agriculture but weave in the off-season. Thus, it may be stated as a broad truth that handloom weaving [in Madras Presidency] is a full time occupation...'

century de-industrialisation, textile production in most of southern India was predominantly a full-time occupation.[55]

Before concluding this section, we may note another set of activities: those related to mining and extraction. These included saltpeter production – located in the Madurai region – the production of iron and limited quantities of crucible steel, and of diamonds. The production of iron, the only metal that was produced in sufficient quantities in the region to be actually exported, seems to have centred around two loci: the first in interior Andhra, the second in western Mysore. The ore was collected from natural washes and surface mining, and smelted in a labour-intensive process. The enterprises involved in the production rarely employed substantial numbers of persons, and there is little by way of contemporary description in the period under consideration.[56] In contrast, the mining of diamonds, particularly in a belt from south of the Krishna to the latitude of Pulicat, exercised great fascination for contemporary observers. The most successful of these mines in the early seventeenth century, Kolluru, is said to have provided employment for about 30,000 people in that period.[57] Once again, in this case, only surface mining was practised, but the dividends seem nonetheless to have been considerable, and included, among others, the Koh-i-noor diamond.

A comprehensive list of the activities that might be termed 'industrial' would, of necessity, take into account a large number of other occupations – from the processing of agricultural products (rice-milling, oil-pressing), to stone carving, blanket making, pottery and so on. We may infer the existence of many of these in south India in the period through references in the inscriptions, but more detailed evidence has to await the documentation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[58] Since the backward

[55] The contrast is of course with the part-time weaver in the Europe of the period, studied in numerous places, for instance, in Franklin F. Mendels, 'Proto-industrialization: the first phase of the industrialization process', *The Journal of Economic History*, Volume XXXII (1), March 1972, pp. 241–61. Some areas in Europe, such as Andalucia, did produce two annual crops, but they were exceptions.

[56] For a rare reference, see Daniel Havart, *Op- en Ondergang van Cormandel*, Amsterdam, 1693, Part II, pp. 196–201, especially pp. 200–1. I am grateful to Selma Lowe for this reference.

[57] 'Methwold's relation' in W.H. Moreland, ed, *Relations of Golconda*, p. 31. '...by their own reports, there worke not daily fewer than 30,000 soules, some digging, some filling baskets, some laving out water with buckets...'.

[58] For a more or less comprehensive enumeration of manufacturing activities in southern India, based on early nineteenth-century evidence, see Dharma Kumar,

extrapolation of such evidence is a procedure of limited validity, suffice it to say for the present that most of these activities would either have occupied small numbers of people, or would have had implications for only a small sphere within which the goods circulated.

This brief summary view of sub-regional specialisation in productive activity has been intended to highlight two points of interest. First, we note that at least in part such specialisation was the result of natural constraints; thus, pepper could not be grown in other regions than where it was, nor could iron and diamonds be mined except where significant deposits existed. While this was true of some activities, there were exceptions. This brings us to our second point then, that sub-regional specialisation was also promoted by the extent of the market. Supporting the concentrated knots of textile producers on Coromandel was a buoyant agrarian economy in the locality, which by all accounts must have consumed a far greater proportion of produced manufactures than external markets. In turn, however, textile production generated a demand for inputs into the production process, raw cotton on the one hand and indigo on the other. Thus, while the specialisation of production in sub-regional pockets may not have developed to the full extent dictated by the logic of von Thunenesque models, moves in the direction were certainly perceptible, and this was the result of the two factors outlined above: natural constraints, and the extent of the market.

State systems and fiscal regimes

Atop the productive base which we have delineated in the last few pages was a set of state structures, which drew their resources from the agrarian and manufacturing economy we have described. Between 1500 and 1650, south India was comprised of several states, some clearly defined, others less so. To the south-west corner of the region, in the area stretching from Mt. Eli to Cape Comorin and usually termed Malabar, we note in 1500 the existence of three major sovereigns. These were, from north to south, the Kolathiri – ruler of Kolathunad, the Samudri *raja* – ruler of Kozhikode, and the Tiruvadi *raja* – ruler of Venad. No very rigid boundaries obtained between the regions controlled by these three, and in the loosely defined interstices there flourished smaller chieftains, controlling regions extending from

'Regional economy (1757–1857): south India', in D. Kumar, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1983, Chapter III.4, pp. 352–75, especially pp. 355–7.

the basic unit of the *nadu* to larger structures that encompassed several of these. The three sovereigns mentioned above – with the Samudri *raja primus inter pares* in about 1500 – commanded the allegiance of the smaller chieftains, and their aid in times of war, but these ties of subordination were fluid over time.[59] In the course of the sixteenth century, we see the rise of a fourth such ruler in Malabar, the *raja* of Cochin, who had earlier been – both in terms of status and resources – of an inferior degree.

Excluding a small section to the north-east, a limited area to the extreme south (in Tirunelveli), and Malabar, the rest of south India was in 1500 under the empire of Vijayanagara. While the political aegis of the empire extended through the entire region we have defined, the actual degree of central control varied enormously from area to area. On the Kanara coast, the tributary chieftains of Gersoppa, Bhatkal, Gangolli, Bangher and Ullal – among others – retained effective control over their dominions, while, elsewhere to the south-west and south-east, the empire (operating from a centre located on the banks of the Tungabhadra) had a variety of equations with local and regional political structures. The expansion of Vijayanagara power had proceeded on the basis of successive campaigns, largely in the southward direction, and had reached its extent, territorially, with the subjugation of the Tirunelveli region in the 1540s. While the conquest may have been the business of imperially raised armies, the continuance of effective domination in the conquered territories was predicated on the migratory movements we have discussed earlier, as well as on *modus vivendi* with local elites. The effective basis of Vijayanagara rule in Arcot, Tiruchirapalli or Tirunelveli lay in coming to terms with leaders of military bands, the ubiquitous *palaiyakkarars* (sometimes, confusingly, termed *nayakas*) whose presence was legitimised by the extant fiscal regime, which was termed the *nayankara* system, and which allowed these local powers to share fiscal resources derived from the producing economy with the central state.[60]

In a formal sense, a certain hierarchy of 'bureaucratic' administration was adhered to as well, the empire being divided into provinces, with provincial governors who mediated between the imperial centre and local powers. By the second quarter of the sixteenth century, though, several of these provincial governors, notably those of Madurai and Tanjavur, had established roots, and transformed their

[59] See K.V. Krishan Ayyar, *A Short History of Kerala*, pp. 75–6.
[60] Venkataramanayya, *Studies in the History*, pp. 171–80; Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 422–3.

posts into hereditary positions.[61] The process was further accelerated in the second half of the sixteenth century, so that, by around 1600, there had emerged several principalities, all of which were notionally subordinate to Vijayanagara, and some of which paid what would in northern India be termed an annual *peshkash*, a sum that was frequently quite large. In most other senses, and certainly where fiscal and general administration within their territories was concerned, these *Nayaka* rulers – under which head one can include not only Madurai and Tanjavur, but Ikkeri and Udaiyar Mysore – were operatively independent. By all accounts, the rulers of Mysore, who had succeeded in displacing the provincial governor at Srirangapatnam by the early seventeenth century, did not even pay an annual revenue sum, nor probably did the *Nayakas* of Ikkeri to the west.[62] In contrast, a certain ambiguity existed in the case of Senji, for we are aware that, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, Venkatapati Raya, the titular Vijayanagara emperor resident at Chandragiri, actively strove to reduce the military and fiscal power of Muttu Krishnappa Nayaka of Senji. With the aid of the Velugoti and Damarla clans, the Chandragiri *raja* appears to have attained a fair degree of success in this venture.[63]

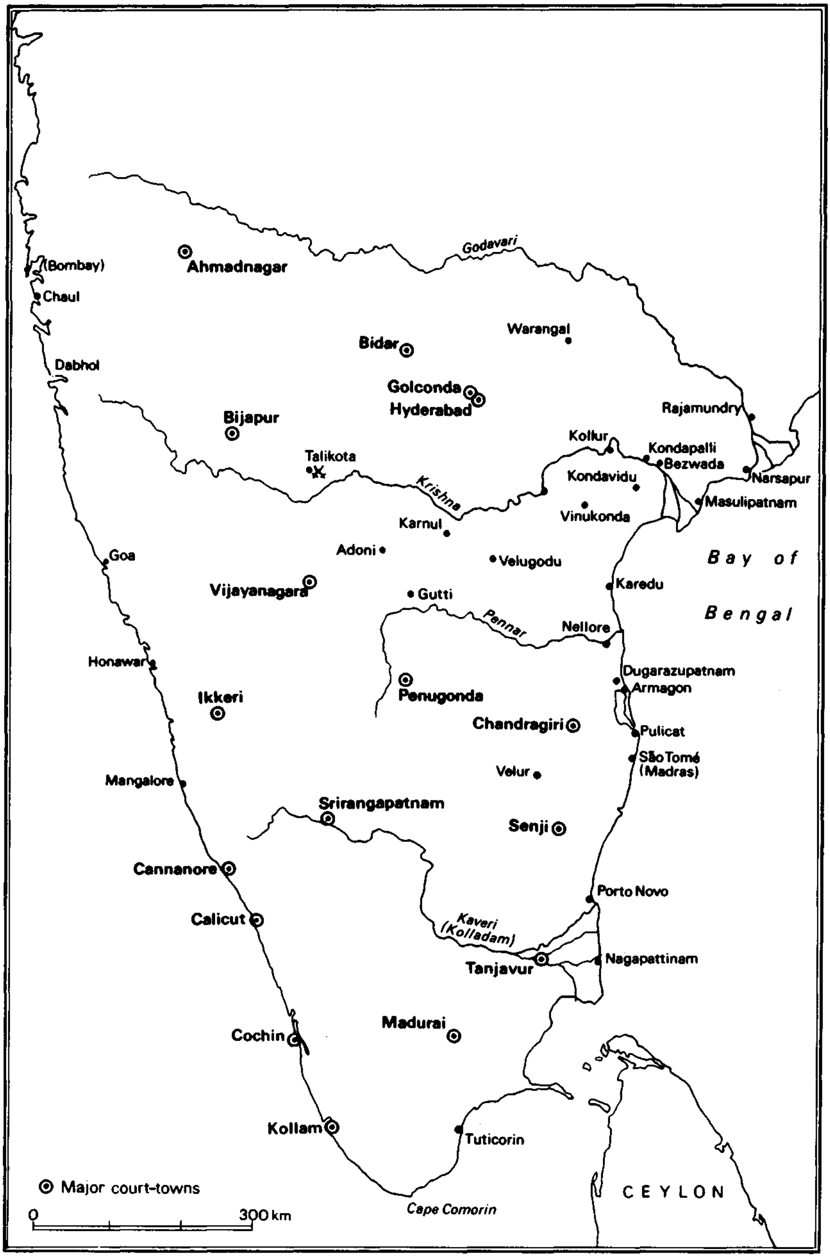
The logic of this process of the formation of semi-autonomous regional centres of power is apparent already in the 1530s, and was only given a fillip after the 1560s, when Vijayanagara forces suffered a military defeat against a confederacy of the empire's northern neighbours, the Sultanates of the Deccan. The period between the military defeat of 1565 and the late 1630s saw some territory to the north encroached upon by the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda, but in substantial terms the expansion southwards of these Sultanates dates to the period 1635 to 1650.[64] In this latter period, harried by Mughal pressure from the north, Bijapur and Golconda forces swept southwards, entirely swallowing the remnants of the Vijayanagara

[61] H. Heras, *The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara*, Madras, 1927; Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, Introduction; V. Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, Annamalainagar, 1942, Chapter II.

[62] See C. Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore [1399–1799]*, Volume I, Bangalore, 1943, pp. 16–19, 45–7.

[63] On the struggle between Venkatapati Raya and Muttu Krishnappa, see the excerpt from the *Bahulasvacharitra* of Damarla Vengalabhupala, and the *Ushaparinayam* of Damarla Ankabhupala, in *Sources of Vijayanagara History*, ed. S. Krishnaswami Ayyangar, Madras, 1919, pp. 304–9; also K.A. Nilakantha Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya, eds. *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, 3 Volumes, Madras, 1946, Volume III, pp. 263–81.

[64] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India from prehistoric times to the fall of Vijayanagara*, 4th edition, Delhi, 1976, pp. 297–303.



Map 2 Southern India: principal political foci, 1500–1650

ruler's own territories, as well as the *Nayaka* kingdom of Senji, and leaving Tanjavur, Mysore and Ikkeri much reduced in size and power.[65]

Since in the period up to the 1650s, no changes of any substantial sort had been brought about in fiscal arrangements in the areas conquered by the Sultanates, we shall conduct the discussion that follows without making further mention of these conquests. In particular, the regimes to be discussed are: (a) in the Vijayanagara empire and the *Nayaka* kingdoms, (b) in the Sultanate of Golconda, and (c) in the Malabar region. It should be noted at the outset that, in contrast to northern India where the fiscal system occupies pride of place in discussions of the pre-colonial economy, many recent writings on south India almost wholly eschew mention of the nature and effects of prevailing fiscal arrangements.[66] Older literature on the region takes as a point of departure scriptural precepts on the question; thus, C. Hayavadana Rao notes that on a plot of land, the state's share was a quarter of the gross produce, and that of the proprietor (if distinct from the cultivator) a further quarter.[67] However, early British documentation talks of a far more rapacious old regime, where amounts extracted were at the very least 40 to 50 per cent, and in the regions of less humane rulers went as high as 70 per cent. This picture cannot be taken seriously, not least of all because of its clearly motivated nature; the benefits of *Pax Britannica* were thought to be proportionately higher the worse the previous regime.[68] Further, there is a genuine problem, as we shall discuss ahead, in

[65] For the events of this period, see *inter alia*, Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore*, Volume I, pp. 118–36; K.D. Swaminathan, *The Nayakas of Ikkeri*, Madras, 1957, Chapter VI.

[66] Stein justifies this in his study *Peasant State and Society* (pp. 2–3) by contrasting his approach to that of earlier authors who 'have seen fit to treat with all agrarian matters in a chapter usually entitled 'land revenue', and goes on to assert that 'to reduce agrarian relations to a matter of land revenue ... is to dismiss a whole range of vital questions'. No one could quarrel with the latter statement, though the dismissal of earlier writings (such as those of Sastri) is less than acceptable. Further the curious, and almost total, absence of any discussion of an economic nature either in the study cited above or, more ironically, in Stein's chapters entitled 'The state and the economy: the south', and 'Vijayanagara c. 1350–1564', in Habib and Raychaudhuri, eds., *CEHI*, volume I, Chapter VII. 3, and IV, is as extreme as the view he criticises. One tends therefore to agree with Frank Perlin's assertion that the revision by Stein and others of his 'school' 'seems to ... substitute one unbalanced and inadequate view for another', with emphasis on ritual relationships and exchanges to the exclusion of all other considerations. See F. Perlin, 'State formation reconsidered', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XIX (3), 1985, p. 421n. Also see E. James Heitzman, 'Gifts of power: temples, politics and economy in medieval south India', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1985.

[67] C. Hayavadano Rao, 'Early south Indian finance', *The Indian Antiquary*, Volume XL, September 1911, pp. 265–72, 281–9.

[68] For example, see *ibid.*, pp. 285–7; K. Rajayyan, *Administration and Society in the Carnatic, 1701–1801*, Tirupati, 1966, pp. 30–52.

seeking a single number which represent the fiscal burden on the producer, when in fact a multiplicity of regimes obtained.

We may observe this multiplicity from two viewpoints, that of the Imperial Treasury, and that of the revenue payer. To take the first perspective would enable us to classify the lands notionally under Vijayanagara or Golconda in a fashion parallelling that adopted in most literature on northern India. To begin with, in both cases, there existed extensive lands under autonomous chieftains of one sort or another, who may have paid a tribute but were free to adopt the fiscal regimes they preferred. Besides, there were regions that the centre claimed to administer directly, termed *bhandaravada* lands in Vijayanagara and the *Nayaka* kingdoms, and *khalisa* in Golconda, in which category we may also include lands attached to imperial fortresses such as Kondavidu or Kondapalli in the Golconda case.[69] Thirdly, there were lands that were exempt in part or wholly from fiscal burdens, and which belonged either to privileged institutions or individuals. Finally, there were lands where the state alienated its right to collect revenue to some individual or institution. If the individual or institution also had proprietary rights, then these merged into the third category.

It is central to an understanding of the fiscal system to note that fiscal flows were embedded in and determined by a power structure in which central authority was merely one of several elements. At the end of a harvest, peasants in a village would be required to make over a part of the produce, either in cash or in terms of the produce itself, either to a single collector, or to several collectors. Some portion of this surplus, which was dealt with at the village level by the headman and accountant (who themselves derived authority in part from above, while at the same time operating within the constraints of intra-village power structures) might wind up in the coffers of a local *palaiyakkarar*, another proportion in that of the *Nayaka* ruler of the region, if the village happened to be located in Tanjavur, Senji or Madurai. At least notionally, it is possible to trace the passage of some part of the surplus through this structure of intermediation to the central treasury at Chandragiri or earlier Vijayanagara. In another set of cases, of so-called *devadana* lands, when fiscal rights on the village were held by temples, a part of the agrarian surplus would eventually come to rest with the temple treasury.[70] To sum up then,

[69] Richards, *Mughal Administration*, Chapter 2; Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, pp. 8–9; Moreland, ed., *Relations*, pp. 11–12; also see Venkataramanayya, *Studies in the History*, pp. 169–70.

[70] On the finances of the larger temples like Tirupati, see Burton Stein, 'The economic function of the medieval south Indian temple', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume

the agrarian surplus that left the revenue-paying village on account of tribute or fiscal flows might pass to a wide variety of destinations, and these would vary from area to area and from case to case.

Can we conclude though, that no matter how the fiscal levy was distributed on leaving the assessee, a uniform fraction of agrarian production was always absorbed by the fiscal sponge? There appears to be little reasonable ground for doing so. In the case of numerous crops, rates were fixed in cash, and related to acreage alone, so that as productivity and prices varied from year to year, the fiscal burden too would have accounted for a greater or lesser proportion of output. In the case of the more prosperous areas, and those where wet cultivation of rice was, in particular, practised, the prevailing mode of collection seems to have been crop-sharing or division on the threshing floor. Here, key variables included the proportion of lands in the village which belonged to groups exempt from land tax, as well as the general extent of *inam* lands in a particular village. One of the few examples one has of a collection agreement comes from the Godavari delta in the late seventeenth century.[71] Here, in the case of four villages of the area, we note that the division agreed upon was as follows. First, the product of lands belonging to the temple priest, the village astrologer, accountant, ironsmith, carpenter, barber, watchmen, and temple dancers (all *manyam* lands of one or the other sort) were exempt. Of the remaining land, the product was to be divided with 3/8ths leaving the village and 5/8ths remaining to the local community. However, there was a further important proviso: out of the 3/8ths leaving the village, ten distinct deductions were to return to the village to meet various expenses. Unfortunately, since the amounts of each of these is unspecified, it is not possible to calculate the proportion finally engrossed by revenue-collecting agencies. In addition, however, we note that land newly brought under the plough was exempt in the first year from tax, and that in the second year, a fourth of produce would be taxed away, subject of course to the deduction of the ten items mentioned above.

XIX, 1959–60, pp. 163–76. Stein fails however to distinguish between the fiscal rights of temples and their rental collections, since he denies the existence of a distinction between the two in the period (cf. *Peasant State and Society*, p. 434). For a discussion of this problem, also see Tsukasa Mizushima, *Nattar and the Socio-Economic Change in Tamilnadu in the 18th-19th Centuries*, Tokyo, 1986.

[71] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1511, Agreements between Johannes Bacherus and the land-owners of the villages Palakollu, Konteru, Golepallem and Gondewaram, fls. 958-v, 959–v, 1144–6v, 1149–53. It is of particular importance, and one should stress that in reaching these agreements, the intention of the VOC factors was to minimise innovation and adhere as closely as possible to existent usage in such matters.

It would be hazardous, particularly in view of our earlier discussion, to generalise from this about fiscal levies elsewhere in south India. More perilous still would be the endeavour to conclude from this that a certain fixed percentage of total agrarian production fell to the share of the state year after year. What in fact obtained in regions where different fiscal regimes prevailed, and where the intermediary structure was more or less elaborate than the late seventeenth-century Godavari delta is a matter for speculation. It is clear that most south Indian states in the period, whether one refers to Vijayanagara, the *Nayaka* kingdoms, Udaiyar Mysore or Golconda, drew their resources essentially from agriculture. Other levies no doubt existed, including poll-taxes, taxes on trade, customs-levies and taxes on professions, but these paled into insignificance in comparison to the sheer magnitude of agrarian surplus as a resource-base.[72]

The exceptional states were those of Malabar. In their case, it is frequently asserted that, by the sixteenth century, no taxes on land existed. Instead the resources of the state came from three other sources: first, levies on trade and commodity movements, secondly, direct participation in trade, and thirdly, the existence of 'demesne' lands belonging to the rulers and farmed by agrestic serfs.[73] While some contest the notion that land revenue did not exist *de jure*, it is generally agreed that at least *de facto* it was of no significance. Effectively, it is pointed out, by the thirteenth century, most lands fell under the category of *brahmadeya* and *devadana*, so that no land tax had to be paid on them. Owner-cultivators in the period between the eleventh and thirteenth century frequently made over their holdings to temples, on the condition that they be retained as tenants, paying a rental between 1/8th and 1/6th of the produce. The concentration of resources thus drawn into the hands of temples and their trustees often brought these institutions into conflict with rulers, as frequently occurred in the case of the Sri Padmanabhaswami temple in the Venad region.

[72] This has been disputed of late by Burton Stein, but the evidence on the proportion of total revenues that were drawn from trade and non-agricultural activities (such as it is), does not appear to support his view; see for example, H.K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, 1974, pp. 481–7, *passim*; Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda*, pp. 10–11, 79–82.

[73] Stephen F. Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier: The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498–1922*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 18–19; also see the interesting discussion of the question in Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Trivandrum, 1970, pp. 325, 332–58.

State and society: problems of characterisation

In characterising the states and underlying socio-economic formations in southern India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, two phrases are frequently encountered in the literature. The first, of some antiquity in usage in the Indian context, and recently revived, is of a 'feudal structure', while the second – a more recent introduction – is of a 'segmentary state'.[74] Of these, the former has the benefit of being a blanket characterisation of not only state formation, but of society and economy in general. On the other hand, segmentary states can exist in various types of economies, not only in the tribal economy for which the concept was first adopted. Stein and other adherents to his view characterise the south Indian economy as a peasant economy, often used in the Chayanovian sense of the term. In the past two decades, different writers have characterised the states and societies of Golconda, Vijayanagara and Malabar in the period under review as 'feudal', without however specifying in unambiguous terms the content of the phrase. In the literature on feudalism elsewhere, two broad strands seem to appear: the first defining feudalism in terms of the system of production, and of production relations, the second in terms of a general ethos and mentality, associated primarily with a military arrangement, and with the fragmentation of state power. Of the economistic version, there are again two variants, the first a more rigorous one which associates feudalism with:

> a socio-economic system which is predominantly agrarian and characterised by a low level of productive forces and of commercialisation; at the same time ... a corporate system in which the basic unit of production is a large landed estate surrounded by small plots of peasants who are dependent on the former both economically and juridically, and who have to furnish various services to the lord and submit to his authority.[75]

The less rigorous version contents itself with describing the feudal production system as one characterised by 'extra-economic coercion'; it is this sense that one encounters the phrase used in the context of the post-independence Indian economy. The second broad stream of interpretation is comprised of those who would stress feudalism as a

[74] Protagonists of the 'feudal' viewpoint include A. Krishnaswami, *The Tamil Country Under Vijayanagara*, Annamalainagar, 1964, while the 'segmentary' notion borrowed from Aidan Southall is most forcefully espoused by Stein, *Peasant State and Society*.

[75] See Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of Feudalism: Towards a model of the Polish Economy*, 1500–1800, London, 1976, p. 9.

military arrangement, drawing attention too to concepts of fealty and vassalage and the importance of the mentalities that underpin the societal structure. It is usually in this sense that theorists of non-European feudalism (for instance that in Japan) pose the problem.[76]

Of these distinct views, there would be few who would adhere to the notion of a manorial economy in the south Indian context. The existence of bonded labour in the more prosperous parts of southern India (the great riverine deltas, Malabar and Kanara) may be associated with the presence there of large concentrations of Brahmin landowners ritually forbidden to touch the plough. Since the notion of 'extra-economic coercion' is clearly too vague a basis on which to define a system, the focus would naturally turn to the interpretation of feudalism as a military arrangement. Here, Burton Stein comprehensively demolishes the notion for Vijayanagara,[77] and subsequent writings favouring the term (such as those of Karashima) fail to note that the mere existence of fiscal hierarchies, or of super- and sub-ordination does not make a society feudal. Thus, Karashima's conclusion that the *palaiyakkarars* of the Arcot region were 'feudatories' (in the rigorous sense) of the Vijayanagara emperor simply because they invoked his name to legitimise their position, appears unwarranted.[78]

While Stein's attack on the feudal interpretation of south Indian history stands on firm ground, many would disagree with his assertion that the Vijayanagara state, like the state of the imperial Cholas, was essentially a segmentary state, whose effective control was restricted to a tiny core region. Representing as it does a reaction to earlier interpretations, which see Indian states of the period as bureaucratically organised, and highly obtrusive as well as intrusive into 'local' societies and economies, Stein's reformulation veers to the other extreme, declaring that outside of the core area (which in this case

[76] The 'extra-economic coercion' definition is usually attributed to Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, London, 1946. For the fullest recent discussion on the utility of any concept of 'feudalism' to India, see Frank Perlin, 'Concepts of order and comparison, with a diversion on counter ideologies and corporate institutions in late pre-colonial India', T.J. Byres and H. Mukhia, eds., *Feudalism and non-European Societies*, London, 1985, pp. 87–165.

[77] Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 372–6; Stein is particularly severe on A. Krishnaswami's work. Also see Stein's more recent essay, 'Politics, peasants and the deconstruction of feudalism in medieval India', in Byres and Mukhia, eds., *Feudalism and Non-European Societies*, pp. 54–86.

[78] N. Karashima, 'Nayaka rule in north and south Arcot districts', pp. 14–18, 24; also see Karashima, *South Indian History and Society: Studies from the Inscriptions, AD 850–1800*, Delhi, 1984, pp. xxxi–xxxii, 159–65.

would presumably be the Krishna-Tungabhadra *doab*, and later the Nellore-Chingleput area), other areas were not 'linked to the imperial centres either by resource flows or by command'.[79] With a focus that excludes from purview all relations between localities and centre other than those of ritual allegiance, Stein neglects to mention resource flows, which were substantial between the Madurai, Tanjavur and Senji regions and the imperial centre as late as the seventeenth century.[80] Besides – and this is crucial – Stein's reformulation has the effect of driving a wedge between Golconda and the 'Hindu' south; the former – according to current wisdom – is seen to conform to an Aligarh-type interpretation of powerful patrimonial-bureaucratic states, the latter to a diffused landscape borrowed from Africanists.

A synthetic view on the other hand, in particular one that derives from historical sources rather than changeless Orientalist constructs, would note that there was little that was in fact different in terms of broad structural characterisation between the Golconda state of the early seventeenth century and the Vijayanagara state (based at Chandragiri) of the same period. In both cases, we observe that, within the broad territorial aegis of empire, there exist extensive lands controlled in effect by tributary chieftains. Again, the landscape in both instances is dominated, particularly in the less lushly prosperous agrarian regions, by *nayakas* and *palaiyakkarars*, who play an important part in the structure of power, and in mediating between central authority and rural society. Further, the presence of revenue farming as a fiscal arrangement characterises both states, and in neither case does this institution appear to have a

[79] Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, p. 367. We may note that more recently Stein's position has begun to shift, in the context of sixteenth century Vijayanagara. See for instance his 'State formation and economy reconsidered', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XIX (3), 1985, pp. 387–413. In this essay (pp. 391–2), we are told of 'the military-fiscalism of the late medieval, pre-colonial regimes of south India – sixteenth century Vijayanagara and its successor Nayaka kingdoms'. For a general critique of this line of development, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Aspects of state formation in south India and southeast Asia, 1500–1650', *IESHR*, Volume XXIII (4), 1986.

[80] For example, a Jesuit observer in the seventeenth century states that of a total annual revenue of 4,500,000 *patacas*, the Nayakas of Madurai used, in the first two decades of the century, to send a sum of 1,200,000 *patacas* to the Chandragiri *raja*. See Baltazar da Costa, 'Relação Anual da Missão de Maduré desde Outubro de 644 ate o de 646, pera o Pe Franciso Barreto, Procurador Geral a Roma pela província do sul', Section entitled 'Do Estado presente deste Reyno quanto ao temporal', published by A. Saulière, 'The revolt of the southern Nayaks', *The Journal of Indian History*, Volume XLII, 1964, pp. 89–105.

deleterious effect on the producing economy.[81] It is curious then that, when all evidence points to similarities, historiography chooses to characterise as polar opposites the state systems obtaining to the north and south of the Penner in about 1600. This is quite clearly the result of the different preconceptions with which the historians of the 'Hindu' south, and the 'Islamic/Mughalised' Deccan have approached the problem of political economy. Indeed, the great ease of transition and continuity observed after the Golconda conquest of the Chandragiri region in the 1640s suggests what we have already observed: that by this period, very little differed between Golconda and the 'Hindu' south where structures of state, and relations between state and society were concerned.[82]

To close our description of the political economy of the region, a brief comment is in order on the structure of property rights, whether in land, or vested elsewhere. In the case of northern India, writings over the past two decades have tended to overturn an earlier orthodoxy derivative from the seventeenth century traveller François Bernier – that property rights in land were vested in the sovereign, and all others were his tenants at will.[83] From this flowed the corollary that fiscal dues were in fact *rental* payments. The writings of I. Habib, B.R. Grover and other have shown, however, that, while private property in land certainly existed in urban areas, in rural areas a limited form of property right in land existed, there being some ambiguity concerning whether the peasant was *obliged* to cultivate the land, and could in fact be forcibly made to do so.[84] In the case of southern India, a seventeenth century equivalent of Bernier is to be found in the writings of the Englishman William Methwold, who declares that the Sultan of Golconda is 'the onely freeholder of the whole country', and all others are his tenants at will.[85] In some recent writings, this problem as much as that of the

81 Richards, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 24–6; Stein, 'The state and the economy: the south', *CEHI*, Volume I, p. 212, 'It appears clear that the level of violence attending the decline and demise of the Vijayanagara state did not seriously alter or inhibit either commercial or agricultural growth'. For a fuller discussion of this question, see Chapter 6 below.

82 Brennig, 'The textile trade', Chapter V.

83 The effects of Bernier on subsequent perceptions is the subject of extensive treatment in Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, 1974, pp. 462–520. However, some recent writings still cling to this myth, such as for example F. Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, London, 1982, pp. 596–8.

84 T. Raychaudhuri, 'The agrarian system of Mughal India' (review article), *Enquiry*, Volume II (New Series), No. 1, 1965, pp. 96–121.

85 'Methwold's relation', in Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda*, p. 10.

fiscal system has been to an extent peripheralised, and instead, recourse is taken to the term 'land controller'.[86] While this term has the advantage of not forcing willy-nilly on south India concepts of private property derived from another context, it suffers from a problem of ambiguity. Numerous distinct rights in land existed in the period, designated separately in local terminology, and it is difficult to understand who in fact the term is meant to designate. Does one mean the *palaiyakkarar,* the actual tillers of the soil, or those who take production decisions, such as what to sow, when to plant, when to harvest and so on? Indeed, on occasion, the use of this term may lead to a failure to distinguish different kinds of right on the surplus produce; on the face of it, the right of the *Nayaka* of Tanjavur and of a Brahmin *mirasi* right holder of the area are not conceptually differentiated.

A second strand in the literature is represented in the writings of Sastri, Karashima, and more recently Heitzman. Karashima argues for the existence of forms of private property rights in southern India from the close of the Chola period (roughly the same period when historians of Malabar trace the rise of *janman* rights), and goes on to show how these rights continued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Chingleput and Arcot districts. A variant of these rights was later to be termed *mirasi,* and Karashima concludes that these were saleable, but were not mere rights to land, but to a complex of privileges with respect to land, water, tax remissions and so on.[87] It is of particular importance to note that the mere saleability of a right on surplus does not make it a property right; often rights which were clearly of a fiscal nature were alienable. In an examination of the nature of rights on land in the Chola period, Dharma Kumar concludes that limited forms of property did exist in that period, and that transactions in these, while not frequent, did obtain.[88] It should be stressed however that these rights were *not* the property rights that obtain in a capitalist economy, and indeed it

[86] This term is frequently resorted to by Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, among others. For a critical view of its use, see Dharma Kumar, 'A note on the term "land control"', in Peter Robb, ed., *Rural India: Land, Power and Society under British Rule*, London, 1983.

[87] Karashima, *South Indian History and Society*, pp. 178–9; also see Heitzman, 'Gifts of power', pp. 117–73. However, these studies, based as they are on removing particular terminological fragments from their enveloping context and studying them, are fraught with their own problems.

[88] Dharma Kumar, 'Private property in Asia? The case of medieval south India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Volume XXVII, No. 2, 1985, pp. 340–66.

would be anachronistic to seek such rights in the context under review, which is to say in a social and economic context vastly different from modern capitalism. The rights that existed often had important qualifications; thus, the rights of occupancy tenants were frequently protected even when property was transacted. This obtained in the Malabar case, where transfers of *janmam* rights occurred with the rights of occupancy tenants below secured. Again, restrictions might exist on sale, or certain persons might have rights of pre-emption in event of sale. Finally, when land was held as a *pangu*, or a share of total land-holdings in a village, the right was not to a specific plot, and consequently periodic re-assignment might occur of the actual piece of land to be cultivated. We may note however that the last two qualifications mentioned obtained typically in the highly stratified and fertile areas of southern India, the two major deltaic regions, and the western coastal strip. Yet with all these provisos, one may conclude that there still appear good grounds for pointing to pre-modern forms of property rights in land held not only by individuals but by institutions. Equally, there are good reasons for separating the income deriving from these rights from fiscal returns, even if they were collected by the same individual or institution.

Even as European observers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries believed that no form of property rights in land existed in India, other than those vested in the sovereign, some believed that property even outside of land was insecure to so high a degree that it was scarcely worth the name. An aspect particularly stressed was an exaggerated notion of escheat; thus, the Englishman John Fryer was to write of Golconda in the 1670s, 'at the death of any nobleman, his wealth falls all into the King's hands, whereby this poor gentleman (his son) for a long time lived an obscure and miserable life'.[89] Although at least one recent historian has made much of this in understanding the rise of European settlements such as Madras (it being argued that 'European law' protected property, whereas local usage did not), an examination of the evidence suggests that escheat was far from widespread in practice, and that Fryer's views represent a misperception widespread among Europeans in both India and China in the epoch.[90]

89 John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia in Eight Letters, being Nine Years Travels, 1672–1681*, London, 1698, pp. 27–8.

90 Cf. I.B. Watson, *Foundation for Empire: English Private Trade in India, 1659–1760*, New Delhi, 1981, Conclusion; for contrary evidence, see S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, pp. 282–8, *passim*.

Conclusion

The central purpose informing this chapter was to set the stage for the discussion of trade that follows in the succeeding six chapters. Our discussion has taken the form, in the main, of a critical review of the literature, with a view to providing a synthetic summary of the main features of the political economy of the region. This is particularly necessary in view of the absence of an adequate general economic history of southern India in the period under consideration. Further, an explication at some level of detail is necessitated if one rejects the blanket characterisations available in extant literature, be it of a feudal state and society, or of a segmentary state superimposed on a peasant society. It is of the greatest importance to note that the historiographical divide that separates some parts of the southern Indian economy from others, in particular the area south of the Penner from that north of it, is an artificial one. Indeed, it has been suggested that the other large historiographic gulf that exists – between the characterisations of the political economy of Mughal India and southern India – is rather more narrow than might appear from older writings.[91] Elements of decentralisation, of local initiative rather than Command Economy, of loose fiscal arrangements rather than a rule-book bound bureaucracy, existed to a far greater extent in the case of Mughal India than orthodoxy would have us believe. Equally, the sphere of economic flows as opposed to mere ritual allegiance, and of fiscal categories familiar to us from the Mughal Indian case, was not quite as alien to the south Indian landscape as one might conclude from recent reinterpretation. It would be useful to bear this in mind while attempting to understand the place of trade in the structure and dynamics of the southern Indian economy and society in the period.

[91] The polar form taken by the two interpretations is nowhere clearer than in the *Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume I, Chapter VII. 1 and VII. 3, 'The state and the economy'. For a critique, see F. Perlin, 'State formation Reconsidered', pp. 421–4, as also Perlin, 'Concepts of order and comparison'.

2

Coastal trade and overland trade: complementarities and contradictions

Introduction

Trade both on sea and on land in pre-colonial southern India was carried on in two sets of commodities: on the one hand, the high-value goods that for decades caused historians to tar Asian trade with the brush of a 'splendid but trifling' activity, on the other hand, the bulky, low value commodities, be they foodgrains or coarse manufactures. It is hazardous to identify these two sets of commodities closely with two sets of trading routes; while the metaphor of 'rice roads' and 'silk roads' may be an evocative one, there is no gainsaying the fact that the ships carrying Chinese silks or pepper frequently carried rice in quantities as well, while the coastal *machuas* plying the rivers and coasts of Malabar, Kanara and Coromandel carried not only paddy, areca, timber and coir, but also pepper, ginger and sandal. While most past historical studies have been concerned with the longer-distance maritime trade, the picture would remain incomplete without an analysis of two other complementary forms of trade, coastal trade and overland trade. In this chapter, we discuss these two in turn, with a view to laying the ground for a synthetic view of the interlinkages between the three forms of trade: coastal, overland and overseas.

In the discussion of trade in the two chapters that follow the present one, the focus will be by and large on the more substantial and conspicuous trading centres, the ports that in K.N. Chaudhuri's terminology might be called 'emporia'.[1] The trade in these ports was not of course self-supportive; both the goods exported and those imported had to be channelised, collected and distributed, with only a relatively small proportion being actually produced or consumed within the environs of the port proper. Let us take the instance of a particular ship's lading, in order to gather an idea of the diversity of areas from which it might have been collected, or was to be

See K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 98–118, for a discussion of 'emporia trade'.

distributed. For example, in early 1640, the ship of a certain Shaikh Malik Muhammad left the Andhra port of Masulipatnam for Bandar Abbas with the following goods: 200 large and 100 small packs of textiles, which probably came from Warangal, and Golconda, as well as the Krishna and Godavari deltas, 500 maunds of Bengal sugar, brought to Masulipatnam on the coastal network, seventy packs of cinnamon, brought from Ceylon on the same network, sixty packs of benzoin (in all probability from Aceh), 100 *khandi* iron from interior Andhra, and 500 *khandi* rice, probably that of Bengal and Orissa.[2] In contrast, the ship of Muhammad Sayyid from Aceh arrived at Masulipatnam in June 1642, with a cargo including eleven large elephants, thirty-five *bahar* cloves, eighty-nine *bahar* pepper, eighteen and a half maunds benzoin, thirty-six maunds nutmeg, thirty and a half *khandi* Acehnese sulphur and various other goods.[3] We may imagine that a very large proportion of these would have been carried overland to Hyderabad, and also to smaller consuming centres such as Kondapalli, Bezwada, and Makkapeta, the last two also being relay centres for the carrying trade to Bijapur and Goa on the one hand, and Burhanpur and Surat on the other. Finally, some of the sulphur on board the ship could conceivably have later been transshipped on to another vessel at Masulipatnam, bound for Persia or on the coastal route to Pipli and Bengal, and this could have occurred with other goods as well. To sum up then, the lading of the typical ship that either arrived or departed from a large port such as Masulipatnam, Cochin or Bhatkal required a supportive network for distribution and collection, and this was provided by the overland and coastal trades. In addition, a producing hinterland frequently existed around such ports as Masulipatnam, in this particular instance populated by textile producers in the neighbourhood. Since the population of Masulipatnam was fairly large, being estimated at around 200,000 in the second half of the seventeenth century,[4] one may assume that some proportion of imports too would have been consumed there, and would not have required redistribution to other consuming centres.

However, on examining the overland as well as the coastal commerce, one discovers that lending infrastructural support to the

[2] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1135, fls. 669–70. [3] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1138, fls. 442–3.

[4] See Chapter 1, note 38; this estimate by John Fryer is cited in Irfan Habib, 'Population', Table 3, in Habib and Raychaudhuri, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume I, p. 171. For comparisons with other Asian urban centres, also see Anthony Reid, 'The structure of cities in southeast Asia, fifteenth to seventeenth centuries', in the *Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, Volume VI, 1980, pp. 235–50.

high-seas trade was only one of the functions of these networks, perhaps not even their most important one. The coastal trade permitted regions that were not self-sufficient in foodgrains to support a large and even growing population. Overland trade too often had a structure and a logic of its own, determined by the regional distribution of areas of production and consumption of particular goods. Even if sub-regional specialisation had not advanced to a point such as is envisaged in von Thunen-type models, it must be borne in mind that it was a feature of the peninsular regional economy. To regard coastal and overland trade as being appendages in any sense of the overseas trade would be to distort the picture. The extent both of the inter-dependence and of the independence of the three networks is thus worth exploring, and this will remain the central theme of the present chapter.

Coastal trade: problems of structure and change

The trade along the coasts of southern India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is best seen as part of a broader sweep, beginning in Bengal in the east, and extending as far as Konkan and Gujarat in the west. In the midst of this intense flux of coastal trade, we find the coasts of southern India: in the east from Srikakulam to Cape Comorin, in the west, from Karwar to the same Cape. Three broad defining statements on the coastal trade need to be made at the outset. First, coastal trade was slow to change, since its basic patterns were determined by factors that were themselves sluggish, namely the distribution of population and the broad location of productive activities. These two determined on the one hand the need to import commodities such as foodgrains into some areas, while in other areas determining the exportable surplus of such goods. This serves to differentiate coastal trade from the far more volatile and fragile overseas trade carried on from the large ports and mercantile centres. Secondly, coastal trade was seasonal, on two accounts. In the case of overseas trade, shipping seasons were at least broadly demarcated, and there existed a season on each of the coasts when shipping almost come to a standstill. In the case of Coromandel, this comprised late October to early January, while in Malabar, it extended from early May to late July or early August. We should note that prevailing winds favoured voyages to particular destinations during still more limited periods; for example, most ships left Coromandel ports for south-east Asia between early September and mid October, returning between late February and early April. In the case of

overseas trade, we note though that this was not an invariable rule, and one of the innovations introduced by the Companies was to sail outside of these traditionally preferred seasonal patterns.[5] In the instance of the coastal trade, on the other hand, since agricultural produce formed a very large proportion of goods carried, shipping was seasonally concentrated not only to avoid the monsoon but to coincide with the aftermath of the major harvest of exporting areas. Thus, for a given twelve month period, coastal shipping would be impossible for three months on account of rough seas and monsoon storms, and during the remaining eight to nine months too would be clustered in one or two thirty to fifty day periods.

The third feature of coastal trade was that it was carried on in a relatively large number of small craft, in marked contrast to overseas trade which was carried on in a relatively limited number of sizeable vessels. These coastal vessels ranged from mere dugouts to larger single-masted boats, and are to be found described by a variety of names on the two coasts. On the eastern seaboard, we find vessels termed *catamarans*, *phares*, *machuas*, *champans*, *tonis*, and *pagels*, while on the south-west coastal strips, there are the *parangues* and *sambuqs* as well as the *machuas*.[6] It is important to note that the relatively small individual size of these craft are more than compensated for by the size of the coastal trading fleets, as we see from various references in the records. For example, the Dutch records of April 1627 tell us of a great storm that had occurred a month earlier on the southern and central sections of Coromandel, in which vessels from São Tomé, Covelong, Porto Novo, Karikal, Tirumullaivasal and Nagapattinam had capsized in substantial numbers; the losses were estimated at over two hundred vessels, and bodies, timber and goods were washed ashore for days afterwards.[7] Despite this great loss, though, the next year coastal trade had resumed at its normal levels, demonstrating the innate resilience of the structure.

[5] For example in 1641–2, we note that while the ship *Amsterdam* left Coromandel in October of the former year for Batavia (the conventional season for departures), the ships *Engel* and *Oranjeboom* left in March, traditionally the season of arrivals at Coromandel; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1138, fls. 414–19v. While Company shipping did thus sail outside the conventional seasons, the bulk of even their shipping continued to be in the most favourable periods. In contrast, instances of Asian shipping sailing outside the demarcated arrival and departure seasons are almost unknown.

[6] For a detailed discussion, with illustrations of these vessels, see Jean Deloche, *La circulation en Inde avant la révolution des transports*, Tome II, La Voie d' Eau, Paris, 1980, pp. 180–91.

[7] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1085, Dagh-Register op't Cust, 9/4/1626–17/9/1628, fls. 37v-38.

To illustrate the three features delineated above, namely stability, seasonality and smallness of individual vessels (combined with the large size of the coastal trading fleet) we shall devote some space in the following paragraphs to an examination of coastal trade on the eastern seaboard. The records on which this study is based are largely those of the seventeenth century, though stray references from the period 1550 to 1600 permit us to infer some things both about structural stability and change. We may begin with northern Coromandel and the region around Masulipatnam. The port of Masulipatnam itself, since it lay in the midst of salt marsh, was not in a position to gain easy access to supplies of foodstuff from its hinterland for its growing population. Rice and other goods (including coconut oil, lamp oil, sugar and turmeric) appear to have been imported on a regular basis as early as the 1560s, if one is to credit Cesare Federici.[8] The growing population resident in this port in the course of the period 1570 to 1650 led to an increasing importance being given to the annual coastal *qafila* from Orissa and Bengal. The Bengal flotilla, usually of between thirty and forty vessels, arrived between about 10 January and end February, bringing large amounts of rice, diverse sorts of gram, a little wheat, and in addition, long pepper, opium, clarified butter, and even the saltpeter of Patna. We may note here that Bengal is defined here to include such ports as Pipli and Balasore, though these are, properly speaking, in Orissa. On the other hand, we have ships from the Gingelly coast, extending north-east from Vishakapatnam to Konarak. These arrived at about the same time as the craft from Bengal, but went on to supply central Coromandel, as far as Pulicat and São Tomé de Meliapor, arriving there between end January and early March.[9]

The timing of these fleets was determined, as we have noted, by two annual cycles: first, these ships could not sail along the coast in November and much of December, for fear of the north-east monsoon, but further, the harvest in Bengal and Orissa – where the agriculture was mainly fed on the south-west monsoon, which determined the principal crop – had to precede the departure of the coastal vessels from those ports. While the 'Gingelly vaerders' – the ships from the Gingelly coast – went further south from Masulipatnam, the ships from Bengal usually returned from north Coromandel

[8] Cited in V.M. Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, Volume IV, p. 64.
[9] See Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605–1690*, pp. 9, 96, 105, *passim*.

itself between early and middle March to their ports of origin. It is of some interest to note that their cargoes on the return journey were frequently negligible, and the craft sometimes even returned empty.[10] Masulipatnam goods that they could carry were not very great in either number or volume, being restricted to some raw cotton, tobacco, iron and crucible steel, and the odd pack of textiles. This pattern – in which the profits on the carrying trade on one leg justified the entire trade, even if the craft had to return on the other leg empty – was a characteristic mainly found on the coastal trade network; one would rarely find it in the long-distance or overseas trade routes, such as Coromandel to Pegu or Cannanore to Aden. Perhaps the only obvious exceptions were the ships to Mocha, and these returned largely empty since treasure does not occupy much cargo space. If the Bengal vessels remained in the Masulipatnam region until late March, they could then hope to pick up a cargo from the arrivals into the port on the overseas network, these largely being in late March or early April.[11] Thus, the coastal trade could serve as distributary to the overseas trade, just as the Bengal silk and opium brought on the flotilla of January and February might be stored and sent out in September and October following on the overseas trade vessels.

Turning to ports further south, we note that in the central Coromandel area, with ports such as Armagon, Pulicat and São Tomé, the dependence on the coastal trade for provisions and foodstuffs continued. In contrast to Masulipatnam, where foodstuff came in part from the inland, via the overland routes, and in part from the ports of Arakan, Bengal and Orissa, central Coromandel drew its supplies in large measure from the so-called Gingelly coast, stretching from the Mahanadi delta in the north to Bimilipatnam in the south. The ports of Konarak, Manikapatnam, Kalingapatnam, Ganjam and Bimilipatnam appear to have been of particular importance in this trade, and the ships usually put in at Pulicat between mid January and mid February, being in particular concentrated in the first two weeks of the latter month. In an examination of the trade, the daily diary maintained by the Dutch factors at Pulicat for certain periods in the decades 1610 to 1650 is particularly useful, for, although we know of the existence of such a

[10] On this aspect of coastal trade, see the numerous shipping lists of the late seventeenth century, such as those cited in notes 23 and 32 below.

[11] On the trade from Masulipatnam to Bengal, the earliest detailed information dates to the early 1680s. See for example *AR*, OB, VOC. 1378, fls. 2083v–89 (1681–82). Also the later lists of ships and cargoes from the 1680s, 1690s and early eighteenth century.

trade from as early as the sixteenth century, these documents enable us to gather a detailed idea of the commodities carried on the network as well as the quantities involved. For the close of our period, for example, we have the *Dagh-Register Pulicat* of the period September 1645 to September 1646;[12] using this, we gather that the coastal craft from the region mentioned above (the so-called 'Gingelly coast') began arriving in that year from about 15 January, and continued to arrive until exactly a month later. The information that the Dutch factors give us relates to the commodities carried as well; as one might expect, there is a good deal of rice (to be precise, 53,518 kgs.), of paddy (110,498 kgs.), and of oil and clarified butter (in all 150 jars), but in addition one encounters large amounts of sesamum, or gingelly, (in all 210,895 kgs.), various *dals* or pulses (25,609 kgs.), and smaller quantities of tobacco, long pepper, lac and wax. Finally, there is a surprisingly large amount – 7,190 *parras* or 170,489 kgs. to be exact – of tamarind. These ships appear to have proceeded no farther south than the Pulicat-São Tomé region, and in the period up to 1650 (when the gravitational pull that Madras was to exert on shipping was yet to make itself felt) they had little to carry back.[13] In the 1680s however, by which time Madras had become a major entrepôt and redistributive centre, these coastal craft frequently brought back a diversity of goods from central Coromandel, ranging from products originating in Gujarat and Persia, to the goods brought in by English private traders from Burma, Malaysia and western Indonesia.[14]

It would appear then that the trade in *mantimentos* – to use the Portuguese omnibus term for the sort of goods described above (which literally means supplies) – followed fairly definite patterns in the period up to 1650. Bengal and Orissa craft put in to the Masulipatnam region, as did a few from eastern Godavari (which is to say ports like Koringa and Thuni), and the Gingelly coast vessels went as far as the central Coromandel deficit area. Still further south, the pattern was reversed however. Once one enters the Tanjavur region, the ports of the Kaveri delta, from Chidambaram to Point Calimere, were all rice exporters. For some reason though, the patterns of flow were established in such a way that these ports

[12] For the 'Dagh-Register Pulicat' of the period September 1645 to September 1646, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1161, fls. 887–975, especially fls. 931v-936.

[13] This is evident from the 'Dagh-Register' cited above, as well as from later shipping lists.

[14] See, for example, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1378, fls. 2083v-2090. On the growth of private trade from Madras in the period, see I.B. Watson, *Foundation for Empire*, *passim*.

rarely, if ever, supplied the deficit pockets to the north. Instead, the bulk of their rice trade was directed southwards. In part, the rice exported from the Kaveri delta ports played the role of ballast in vessels trading to Aceh, a particularly strong trading connection where Nagapattinam was concerned and one which survived into the 1680s, when the port had been shorn of much of its other overseas trade.[15] In addition, Nagapattinam supplied the west coast of Ceylon, Jaffna, and for much of the sixteenth century southern Malabar as well.[16] From the early Portuguese accounts, it would appear that the rice of Kanara supplied northern Malabar, while Coromandel rice found its way as far north as Calicut, probably no further. One need only mention as an illustration the famous incident of 1498, when Dom Vasco da Gama on his first visit to the port of the Samudri seized several vessels laden with rice there, which had arrived from the Kaveri delta,[17] and this neatly encapsulates the ubiquity of Coromandel rice on the Malabar coast in the period. But it seems that, in quantitative terms, the trade from Nagapattinam and neighbouring ports was oriented far more towards Ceylon. This was remarked as early as 1506 by Ludovico di Varthema,[18] and we note too that the profits of the rice trade to Jaffna are said to have been the principal attraction on account of which Portuguese *caśados* settled at Nagapattinam in the first half of the sixteenth century.[19] There is no lack of evidence from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries showing the intense trade between the southern Coromandel region and maritime Ceylon;[20] a part of this trade was used to supply the *Estado da Índia*'s garrisons and hence orchestrated by the Portuguese administration, but a good deal was the province of private traders, carrying rice and bringing back the staples of the import trade, large quantities of areca, cinnamon and timber, as well as elephants.

15 For examples, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1378, fls. 2096v–2097 (1681–2); VOC. 1405, fls. 1805v-1808v, etc. In the former year, the departures from Nagapattinam included two ships to Aceh, one of a Marakkayar trader, the other of a 'Moorish priest' based in Aceh.

16 This is evident in the purchases of rice made by the *Câmara de Cochim* in the 1580s and 1590s, for which see *BNL*, Fundo Geral, Códices 1979 and 1980.

17 See A. Fontoura da Costa, ed., *Roteiro da Primeira Viagem de Vasco da Gama [1497–99] por Álvaro Velho*, Agência Geral do Ultramar, Lisbon, 1960.

18 See J.W. Jones, ed. and trans., *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, London 1928, pp. 71–3.

19 See António Bocarro, 'Livro das plantas de todas as fortalezas, cidades e povoações do Estado da Índia Oriental', in A.B. de Bragança Pereira, ed., *Arquivo Português Oriental* (New Series), Nova Goa, 1938–9, Tomo IV, Volume II, Parte II, pp. 1–2.

20 For example, see Fernão de Queyroz, *The Spiritual and Temporal Conquest of Ceylon*, trans. S.G. Perera, Colombo, 1927, 2 Volumes, pp. 365, 432, *passim*.

Unfortunately, there is little by way of quantitative information to be had on this trade until the late seventeenth century, when the Dutch shipping lists for Nagapattinam shed light on the direction and dimensions of its direction. In 1681–2, for instance, of a total of sixty-nine vessels that left Nagapattinam between 1 August of the former year and 31 July of the latter year, twenty-eight were destined for Colombo and Negombo, two for Gale, one for Trincomalee, twelve to Manar and Jaffna, with other ports outside Ceylon accounting for the remaining twenty-four. Again, in 1682–3, Colombo, Negombo, Trincomalee, Jaffna and Manar accounted for forty-nine of the ninety vessels leaving Nagapattinam. The exports in this period were as one might have expected: large amounts of paddy (243,095 kgs. in 1681–2, and 170,726 kgs. in 1682–3), and still larger quantities of rice (704,412 kgs. in 1681–2, and 284,544 kgs. in 1682—3), with the only other export of significance on the coastal network being rough textiles. Imports on the other hand were dominated by a single commodity: areca.[21]

It is also possible in the 1680s to gain an idea of the seasonality of coastal trade at Nagapattinam. As we have mentioned elsewhere, where overseas trade was concerned, the port conformed to the general Coromandel pattern, departures being clustered in August and September, and arrivals in March and early April. In contrast, however, we see that the departures on the coastal circuit follow a bi-modal annual distribution, with one busy season for the export of rice and paddy stretching from July to October, petering out in November, and reaching a trough in December and January. Thereafter, February and March were months of truly intense trade, the busiest two of the entire year. Once again though, by early April, shipping had petered out and continued to maintain a low level through the next three months, reviving only in late June, or more frequently in early July. It is of crucial importance to note the causal relationship between the harvest seasons and the trade in rice. The Tanjavur area was sufficiently fertile to support two substantial rice crops, the first harvest of the shorter duration *kar* paddy which depended on the earlier south-west monsoon, being sown in June and harvested in September, and the second of the superior *pisanam* variety, which was cut only in February after seven months growth.[22] It was on the basis of these two that the seasonality of coastal trade

[21] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1378, fls. 2096v-2097 (for 1681–2); VOC. 1405, fls. 1356v-1360 (for 1682–3).

[22] See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, Madras, Volume II, Oxford, 1908, pp. 140–1.

was determined, together of course with the weather cycle, which made certain seasons perilous for even coastal navigation. The effect of the storms in the Bay can be seen when one takes these lists of departures together with those of arrivals; while arrivals in Nagapattinam are fairly substantial in every month from March to October (though peaking in two periods, May to July, and in October), there are almost no returning craft in November, December and January, a phase when outward shipping too is at a low. Further, in the case of Nagapattinam too, we remark the same phenomenon that we have noticed in the case of the coastal trade at Masulipatnam: that a fair proportion of coastal craft returning to the port are empty, implying that the profits on the outward leg were sufficient to justify the trip as a whole. Conspicuous examples of this are to be encountered for instance in 1685–6, when of twenty-six craft returning to Nagapattinam twenty-three were empty.[23] We shall have occasion to comment on this somewhat later in the discussion as well.

The vitality of the coastal trade, characterised as it is by the three features delineated above, continues to be observable when one looks to the Madurai and Fishery Coasts, as well as when one turns to the south-west India seaboard. Since, in this period, the coast from Point Calimere to Cape Comorin sheltered no really major port that participated directly in the overseas trade, the place of coastal trade on this segment was, if anything, reinforced. The saltpeter of Madurai, much in demand in the first half of the seventeenth century, either made its way overland to the ports of Tanjavur to be shipped from there, or had to be carried overland from Tuticorin, Kayalpatnam and neighbouring havens to the Malabar coast and Goa, where it was transshipped to enter more general circuits of commodity exchange.[24] Another commodity produced in the Madurai-Tirunelveli area, the spread of which can be directly attributed to the influence of the Portuguese in the area, was tobacco.[25] Just as the Krishna-Godavari region tobacco found its way southward along the coast, as well as to Arakan, the tobacco of the Tirunelveli region entered the coastal circuit to be carried up the south-west coast. The same region (the so-called Fishery coast) also exported rice to Ceylon, though one

[23] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1423, fls. 819v-822v, shipping list for Nagapattinam (1685–6).
[24] For details of the saltpeter trade, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 302; VOC. 1113, fls. 324v-25; VOC. 1119, fls. 1124–5.
[25] On tobacco in Tirunelveli, see David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, pp. 16–17, 137, Map VII; S. Kadhirvel, 'Portuguese colonial impact on agriculture and trade: the Tamil coast', in N.R. Ray, ed., *Western Colonial Policy*, pp. 318–25.

suspects that this was at least partly the rice of Tanjavur transported overland, to supplement that of the Tamraparani and Vaigai valleys. The importance of coastal trade in this particular area was linked to two other commodities as well, on the one hand the pearl and shell fishery that gave the coast its name, and which annually drew traders to Punnaikayal, Tuticorin and neighbouring ports in March and April (the annual fishing season), and on the other hand, the trade in areca.[26] The importance of the latter can be gauged from the fact that one of the important (though illegal) perquisites of the Portuguese captain at Tuticorin, a post created after 1628, was said to be his levies on the *botiqueiros* who sold the good.[27]

Since the coastal *cafilas* of vessels were amongst the few forms of independent waterborne trade actually encouraged by the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, a brief digression may be in order here on the coastal trade that developed in the sixteenth century between Coromandel and the west coast, the so-called *cafila do Coromandel.* From about the mid sixteenth century, it became the practice for fleets of small coastal vessels, owned in part by Asian traders based in Coromandel, but in the main by the Portuguese and *mestiço* traders of both the Coromandel settlements and Cochin, Goa etc., to make their way from the south-east coast, rounding Cape Comorin early in the year, in January or February. They were met at the Cape by a Portuguese escort fleet despatched from Goa, which would escort them as far as Cochin or Goa, depending on the destination of the vessel, as well as (to anticipate the analysis in Chapter 4) on the customs house regulations current at the time. Thus, the purpose of the escort fleets was not merely to protect the vessels from the depredations of the Malabar 'pirates' and the Dutch 'rebels', it was also to ensure that the vessels did not pass to unfriendly ports, and that they paid their due to the Portuguese Crown. These *cafilas* comprised large numbers of small vessels, and carried provisions as well as grain for Malabar, and textiles too. As early as 1568, we find the statute book of the Goa customs house detailing the textiles that annually arrived there from Coromandel, from ports as far north as Masulipatnam.[28] A small proportion of these textiles may have

[26] F.P. Mendes da Luz, ed., 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas que a Coroa de Portugal tem nas partes da Índia, e das Capitanias e mais Cargos que nelas há e da importância deles', in the *Boletim da Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra*, Volume XXI, 1953, pp. 77–8.

[27] See *Historical Archives*, Panaji, Goa (henceforth *HAG*), Monções do Reino No. 19 D, fls. 1105–13v.

[28] *BNL*, Fundo Geral, Códice 2702, fls. 3v-4.

passed on to Europe, the rest probably being dispersed in other consuming markets, such as Goa itself and the Persian Gulf. It should be noted that this practice – of the coastal *cafila* to Goa – was in all probability a new one, introduced in the course of the sixteenth century; so far as we are aware, Coromandel vessels (even coastal craft) did not in 1500 sail farther up the Indian west coast than Calicut.[29]

On the south-west coast itself, the importance of the coastal trade is well documented, particularly in the Portuguese records. Of particular significance is the rice trade from the ports of the Kanara coast, in supplying not only Malabar, but also Goa, the Persian Gulf and Muscat. In the early sixteenth century, the principal rice-trading port was Bhatkal, but later in that century and early in the seventeenth century, this role was taken over in large measure by the port of Basrur, once Bhatkal had fallen into decline. The rhythm of the coastal trade was, of course, somewhat different from that on the south-eastern strip, since the off-season for sailing was between May and August, determined by the force of not the north-east but the south-west monsoon. The figures in Table 2.1 show monthly customs revenue collected at Goa in 1625–6, and serve to illustrate the seasonal cycle here, and to distinguish it from that of the other coast.[30]

It is worth stressing once again in the context of the south-west coast that the channels for the movements of rice, one of the more important commodities on this circuit, were highly well-defined. Thus, while Kanara rice found its way annually to the Persian Gulf and Muscat, not much made its way to Ceylon, except when the Portuguese *Estado* intervened to direct a fraction of the flow thither. Again, while we know of an extensive trade in rice between Bengal and the Maldives, not much by way of Kanara rice, which had to travel a far shorter distance than that of Bengal, was exported to these islands. One part of the explanation possibly lies in the re-export of Kanara rice from Malabar to the Maldives, but we must also bear in mind, besides the taste and preference for specific varieties, the fact that Bengal shippers and traders had a strong motivation to trade in

29 Thus, the total absence of mention of Coromandel craft on the Kanara coast and in Goa in the early sixteenth-century accounts of Pires and Barbosa.

30 *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*, Lisbon (henceforth *AHU*), Caixas da Índia, No. 9, Document 38. Since the figures in the period January to August are weekly, some adjustments have been made. Thus the periods considered are in fact not calendar months but January to 1 February, 3 February to 1 March, 3 March to 29 March, 1 April to 3 May, 5 May to 31 May, 2 June to 28 June, 30 June to 2 August, and 4 August to 30 August. Thereafter, the data are monthly.

Table 2.1. *Monthly customs collected at Goa, 1625 (in xerafins)*

Period	Amount	Period	Amount
January	14,683	July	254
February	40,421	August	317
March	3,820	September	4,202
April	7,261	October	7,006
May	4,743	November	12,568
June	551	December	8,926

Source: See note 30.

the Maldives, given the importance of the return cargo – *cauris*.[31]

The Portuguese records of the early seventeenth century are particularly informative in respect of the coastal trade in rice from *one* port on the south-west coast, and this is Basrur. From the 1570s, a small settlement of Portuguese and Luso-Indian *casado* traders was in existence in the port. There were among the Basrur settlers – who numbered some thirty-five Portuguese and *mestiço* households – several who owned ships, and António Bocarro writing in the 1630s tells us that 'the Portuguese *casados* of the fortress have seven or eight galliots of up to 300 *khandis* burthen each'.[32] In the first three decades of the seventeenth century, Basrur was of central importance as a rice-trading port on the Kanara coast. As we shall see in a later chapter, a Portuguese fort had been set up at Basrur in 1569; prior to this, the rice trade of the lands around the Kundapur estuary used to be in the hands of the 'Chatins de Barcelor', the largely Saraswat-dominated mercantile community resident at Basrur. The settlement of the Portuguese fort did not wholly end the trade of these merchants. Their active resistance to the Portuguese in the 1570s and 1580s had the effect of forcing the *Estado da Índia* to remove the customs house it had created in the fort, commanding the mouth of

[31] On the Bengal-Maldives trade, one of the earliest accounts is by François Pyrard de Laval. For his narrative, see the Hakluyt Society edition, *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas and Brazil*, 2 Volumes, ed. Albert Gray, London 1887–8, Volume I, pp. 239–40. An alternative version is J.H. da Cunha Rivara, ed., *Viagem de Francisco Pyrard de Laval*, reprint Porto, 1944, 2 Volumes. For some later information on the trade, Om Prakash, 'Asian trade and European impact: a study of the trade from Bengal, 1630–1720', in B.B. Kling and M.N. Pearson, eds., *The Age of Partnership: Europeans in Asia before Dominion*, Honolulu 1979, pp. 43–70; also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Notes on the sixteenth century Bengal trade', *IESHR*, Volume XXIV (3), 1987.

[32] António Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte I, pp. 317–18.

the estuary, and we encounter several references to the independent shipowning and trade of these merchants early in the seventeenth century. The voyages were, when of longer distance, typically directed at Muscat, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf, and when of shorter distance at Goa and the Malabar ports. Rice from Basrur (both the finer *jirigai* and the more coarse *amutti* variety, but particularly the former) was also carried to locations as dispersed as Ceylon, Melaka and Moçambique, usually by way of Goa or Cochin. There were some atypical instances too, such as that which one notes from a *cartaz* granted by the *Estado* to one Sandegaro Chatim in 1621; the navicert was issued for a *naveta* of 800 *khandis* burthen, destined for Bengal, carrying over 170 persons on board besides five pieces of artillery.[33] What makes this case atypical is the ship's destination. Voyages to Bengal from Kanara were rare, but given the sizeable market for pepper in Bengal, and the fact that Kanara was a major producer of the same commodity, it appears clear that the cargo would have largely been of this good.

While rice and pepper were exported from Basrur then, not only by private merchants, but the Nayakas of Ikkeri, and by the pepper contractors of the Portuguese Crown, it was by no means a two-commodity port either, for Bocarro writing in the 1630s lists among its imports coral, seed-pearls, rubies, tutenage, horses and elephants, and among its exports, besides rice and pepper, textiles (particularly *bethilles*) from over the Ghats, and saltpeter.[34] But most references to Basrur in the records of the *Estado da Índia* see it as the rice port *par excellence*, supplying not only Goa, but other garrisons and settlements of the *Estado* as well. It is possible to estimate the exports of rice from Basrur in the first three decades of the seventeenth century from the Portuguese records of the period, when the factor resident there collected an impost of five *bazarucos* (a copper coin) on each bale of rice exported, no matter who the exporter was. Given the accusations of inefficiency and of dishonesty levelled at these officials (particularly in the 1620s), it would be well to treat these not as exact estimates of exports but as lower bounds, since an efficient and honest factor could only have collected more, and not less. Making these assumptions, we arrive at the figures shown in Table 2.2.[35]

[33] *HAG*, Livro de Consultas, Mss. 1043, fls. 65–5v.
[34] Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte 1, p. 317.
[35] These figures have been arrived at as follows. For the period up to March 1628, we know the total value of collections at Basrur (by the sub-periods mentioned in the table) of an impost worth 5 *bazarucos* on each bale of rice exported. Given the

Table 2.2. *Rice exported from Basrur, 1611–30*

Period	Export	(in kilograms)
1611–16	Total	: 9,900,000
	Annual average	: 1,975,000
1623	Total	: 1,530,000
Sept. 1625–March 1628		: 6,850,000
	Annual average	: 2,750,000
1628–9	Total	: 3,500,000 (+)
1629–30	Total	: 4,500,000 (+)

Source: See note 35.

The bulk of this rice was destined for Goa, where annual imports from Kanara in the 1630s have been estimated at 5.5 million kilograms.[36] However, at least some proportion of the exports from Basrur in this period were destined for other ports. In the 1620s, the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* was particularly anxious to supply their fort at Muscat, and one notes that the Revenue Council at Goa in 1632 granted permission with great alacrity to a certain Martim Teixeira de Azevedo to send two pinnaces loaded with rice every year from Basrur to Muscat for a period of three years, thus to ensure the garrison a minimum supply. There are numerous other instances as well of orders placed during the 1620s and 1630s by the *Estado* for rice from Basrur, frequently using as purchasers Saraswat merchants such as Rama Kini or Vithala Nayak.[37]

Indeed, so important was the Kundapur estuary as a supplier of rice, that the Portuguese actually entered in the early 1630s into a

value of this coin, at 1/75 of a *tanga*, one can calculate the number of bales exported in each sub-period. The collection figures are in *HAG*, Monções do Reino 13A, fls. 22v, 102v. The bale measure is converted into kilograms at each bale equals 3 *maunds,* and one *maund* equals 11 kg. However, if one follows António Nunez's mid-sixteenth century account, it would appear that the bale of rice was somewhat larger and weighed about 46 kgs, in which case we would have to scale the entire table up by 40 per cent (Antonio Nunez, 'O Livro dos Pesos, Medidas e Moedas', in R.J. de Lima Felner, ed., *Subsídios para a História da Índia Portuguesa*, Lisbon, 1868, Part I, pp. 32, 58)

Finally, the figures for the period 1628–30 are arrived at from the amounts paid in 1628–9 and 1629–30 by revenue-farmers bidding for the right to collect the impost of 5 *bazarucos.* Assuming that they recovered at least what they bid, 1,425 *xerafins* in 1628–9, and 1,825 *xerafins* the following year, we arrive at a base figure which rice exports must have exceeded. Briefly then, the figures in the table represent lower bounds on the export of rice in each sub-period under consideration.

36 M.N. Pearson, *Coastal Western India: Studies from the Portuguese Records*, New Delhi, 1981, p. 77; Teotonio R. De Souza, *Medieval Goa: A Socio-Economic History*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 172; Bocarro, 'Livro das Plants', Parte 1, p. 284.

37 *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda (1631–7), fls. 144–v, 170, *passim.*

political adventure in the area, in order to acquire rights over the peninsula of Gangolli, which overhung the mouth of Kundapur estuary. During the viceroyalty of the Conde de Linhares (1629–35), a fortress was constructed on the peninsula and grandiose plans mooted to dig a trench sufficiently deep to turn the peninsula into an island, secure from attack on the land-side.[38]

On the west coast, besides rice and paddy, another set of goods of great importance were those associated with the coconut-palm: coconuts, coir, and oil. So too sugar, the finer variety produced in Kanara as well as jaggery, were staples carried on the *zambucos* and *machuas* of the coast. Finally, as we will show in chapter 4, with an increasing amount of pepper falling in the period from 1600 to 1650 into circuits controlled neither by the Companies nor by the *Estado*, the place of these coastal craft, which were swift, manoeuvrable, and–above all–inconspicuous, was if anything reinforced, as the clandestine carriage of this commodity to the Konkan and Gujarat ports grew apace.

Before concluding this section on coastal tráde, three issues of importance in the context of this sort of commerce require to be raised. The first is of the relationship between coastal trade and overseas trade in the life-cycle of a port. The second is that of the character of traders on the coastal circuit, and of whether they differed substantially from overseas traders. The third issue, which is related to the second, concerns the role of states and of structures of fiscal administration in the coastal trade, particularly that of foodgrains. Turning to the first, we have already noted that at least some of the major ports required to import food to meet consumption needs. Thus, in the first half of their life-cycle, as ports like Masulipatnam grew to attain a population of over 100,000, their import needs on the coastal circuit grew as well. To an extent then, the growth of overseas trade from the port, contributory to the growth of its population, would in turn cause a growth in its participation in the coastal trade. What is remarkable however is that when the cycle took a down-turn, from the 1670s on, the overseas trade fell somewhat while on the other hand the coastal trade continued to be maintained at a high level.[39] This could be explained in several ways. The first is that the

[38] *HAG*, Monções do Reino 13A, fls. 263–6; Monções do Reino 14, fls. 212v–213; Monções do Reino 15, fls. 2–3, 27v–28; Monções do Reino 16A, fl. 11; Monções do Reino 17, fls. 63–v.

[39] This can be seen from various Dutch shipping lists from the 1680s, 1690s and early eighteenth century, such as *AR*, OB VOC. 1624, fls. 247–54 (1698–9); VOC. 1649, fls. 185–96 (1700–1); VOC. 1664, fls. 647–59 (1701–2); VOC. 1855, fls. 53–7

decline in the port's population was not as rapid as the decline in its overseas commerce, on account of the fact that it continued to be subsidiary to the commerce of a centre of growing importance, namely Madras farther south.[40] A second possible explanation might be in terms of Masulipatnam's importance as a grain and staple market, which it was slow to lose. However, both this case and that of Bhatkal on the west coast – which in contrast was a rice and primary product *exporting* port – show that overseas trade tended to be far more volatile than coastal trade. Further, these cases together with Nagapattinam show the existence of a sort of 'ratchet effect' relating coastal and overseas trade: when the overseas trade of these ports grew, their coastal trade grew too, but when the overseas trade declined, the decline in coastal trade was not of corresponding dimensions.

Turning to the second question, that of the character of overseas traders as opposed to coastal traders, one does of course discover an overlap in a certain proportion of cases. Thus, substantial Masulipatnam based overseas traders in about 1600 are also seen to participate in the coastal trade from Pulicat, simply because they needed the textiles of central Coromandel for their export cargoes.[41] Similarly, in the case of certain substantial seventeenth century traders like Achyutappa and Chinanna Chetti, we observe that at least a proportion of their trade was coastal trade, from the central Coromandel ports to Bengal and Orissa on the one hand, and to Ceylon on the other. The Masulipatnam based shipping of Mir Muhammad Sayyid Ardestani was in part used to supply rice to Jaffna and Colombo in the 1630s and 1640s. Finally, the Companies themselves participated in coastal trade, not only to move textiles from a producing centre to a collection and shipment centre, but to fetch supplies of rice and other goods for their own needs and the requirements of weavers and other artisans in their employ. Yet, despite the acknowledged fact of overlap in activities on the coastal and overseas circuits, there is some reason to believe that much of the

(1713–14); VOC. 1912, fls. 132–9 (1718–19); VOC. 1962, fls. 334–8 (1719–20). For the 1680s, there also exist some English records on shipping at Masulipatnam at a comparable level of detail; for example, see *Records of Fort St. George*, Masulipatam Consultation Book of 1682–3, Madras, 1916.

[40] This emerges clearly from the shipping lists cited above, and we see from these the high proportion of goods transshipped at Madras that enter Masulipatnam in the 1680s and thereafter.

[41] See Isaac Commelin, ed., *Begin ende Voortgangh van het Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 2 Volumes, Amsterdam, 1646, Volume II, Verhael XII, pp. 62–3.

coastal trade of the flotillas that descended from Bengal and Orissa to Coromandel in January and February, or which left Basrur, Bhatkal and Barkur for Goa late in the year, was in the hands of a set of merchants distinct from those of the overseas circuit. Whether or not such persons, trading on the coastal circuit, ought to be characterised as the real 'peddlers' is another question: there is little evidence of the fact that they hawked their wares on arriving at a port, and every evidence that these movements were well organised as well as consigned. Yet the coastal traders did have certain distinct characteristics. In the case of the south-west coast, there existed a distinction between *Pardesi* Muslim traders and *Mappilas*, and it was the latter who dominated the coastal trade in their small craft. On the Kanara coast again, the character of community such as the Saraswat 'Chatins' of Basrur appears to be essentially that of a group of coastal traders. While they may have sent the occasional ship to the Red Sea, their strength in fact lay in the trade along the west coast, in small craft. On the south-east coast, a group that came in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to assume great importance in this form of trade were *mestiços*, as well as native converts to Christianity. There are frequent references in the Dutch records to the small craft of such traders from Ceylon, laden with areca, or from Tuticorin, carrying tobacco and chank.[42] The Pulicat shipping records from the mid-1640s cited earlier tend to support the picture of a divergence between those who engaged in coastal trade and the larger overseas shipowners. Thus, the supply ships from Orissa at the port in January and February 1646 were either owned by *mestiços* or by Chetti merchants, including persons with names such as Ramappa, Venkanna and Thambi.[43] One should hasten to add that several of these merchants owned more than one vessel, indicating that they were by no means single-ship itinerants, but operators on a more significant scale.

This picture is substantially confirmed by evidence from the 1680s when we have data on coastal as well as overseas shipping from various ports on Coromandel. Thus, in this period, coastal shipping from Nagapattinam appears largely on account of Portuguese and *mestiços* (Paulo Ataíde, António Manuel, João d'Ataíde, António Brito etc.),[44] none of whom are to be encountered as overseas

[42] See *AR*, OB, VOC. 1062, fl. 41v; also *ANTT*, Manuscritos da Livraria, 1109, fls. 18–21; S. Arasaratnnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658–1687*, Amsterdam, 1958, pp. 145–51.

[43] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1161, fls. 931v–935v.

[44] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1423, flS. 819V–822V (1685–6).

shipowners operating either from Nagapattinam or from neighbouring Porto Novo, the major Indo-Portuguese trade centre of the area in the 1680s. A curious schism also appears when one examines evidence on the Muslim trading communities of the region: while overseas craft, almost without exception, are owned by Marakkayars, there is a fair degree of Labbai participation in the coastal trade.[45] I should stress that this does not necessarily mean that the *mestiços* or Labbais mentioned as shipowning traders on the coastal circuit did not trade overseas; it merely implies that, if they did so, it must have been by freighting space on board the ships of others.

The third question raised is perhaps the most difficult to answer adequately: the problem of state and fiscal structures and their participation, whether direct or indirect, in coastal trade. As we shall see in the next section, when one turns to the overland trade, it is frequently argued that the state played an important role in that context. This was because the state either collected fiscal dues in produce and then traded in it itself, or, more frequently, forced such produce to be marketed by the producers to pay fiscal dues, thus bringing it into the circulatory nexus. Such an argument has rarely been articulated in the specific context of coastal trade, but it seems but a short step from making such a statement concerning overland trade to generalising it over all circuits of commodity movement.

In the historiography on southern India, one finds at least two instances where such an argument has been mooted. In a recent study, Geneviève Bouchon attributes the rice trade from the Kaveri delta to Malabar in the early sixteenth century not to the profits it brought the traders, but to the direct interest taken by the Vijayanagara rulers in promoting this trade, since it yielded them revenues.[46] Again, where north Coromandel is concerned, Joseph J. Brennig argues that, in the seventeenth century, state participation in the foodgrains trade was the norm. His claims in fact are that the free grain market remained a 'peripheral institution', in the face of a Polanyiesque 'administered trade' in foodgrains.[47] Central to this

45 For example, in the shipping lists for Porto Novo in the 1680s, there are no Labbai shipowners encountered on the overseas routes. Thus, in 1681–2, departures included the ships of Sayyid Marakkayar, Nalla Boka Marakkayar, Mudali Marakkayar, and Hassan Marakkayar, but there were no Labbai shipowners to be encountered. *AR*, OB, VOC. 1378, fls. 2085–7.

46 See Geneviève Bouchon, 'Trading societies in Kerala at the beginning of the sixteenth century', in V.K. Chawda, ed., *Studies in Trade and Urbanisation in western India*, Baroda, 1985, pp. 1–11.

47 See Joseph Brennig, 'The textile trade of seventeenth-century northern Coromandel', pp. 210–12.

conception is a tax called *guddam*, which comprised the following. The state collected land revenue in rice, and this rice was subsequently sold *forcibly* to the non-agricultural population at 50 to 100 per cent above the market price by state officials. He goes on to argue that this tax was severely regressive in nature, and the cause of crisis in most weaver households, who were as a consequence of it constantly in peril of falling below subsistence, since in effect it turned terms of trade against manufacture. The evidence produced in support of this rather strong claim comprises a mention in van Ravesteyn's early seventeenth century account, and another somewhat later in Daniel Havart's description of Coromandel.[48] It pre-supposes an all-powerful bureaucratic administration, capable of enforcing such a tax, and begs the question of why such a curious form of tax should have been levied, in place of differential poll tax, or other more easily administerable levies, such as the frequently resorted to loom and hearth taxes. It is therefore unlikely to have been on any substantial scale, and was probably an exception rather than the rule. More curiously, this picture of an extensive involvement of the state in rice trade scarcely jells with the sparse references in the documents to trade in rice by State officials (the *havaldars* and *sar samatus*) or by the Sultan himself. Other evidence, for instance, in the Portuguese records of the early seventeenth century on the Madurai coast, serves to reinforce the hypothesis that, while state structures in rice surplus regions taxed rice exports, and on occasion even used export controls as a political weapon (for instance the cessation of Kanara rice exports to Goa in brief periods during the 1620s and 1630s,[49]) such a trade did not lend itself to sustained state control. Given the number of potential rice-exporting ports in such regions as Kanara or the Kaveri delta, control would have been impossible given the limited resources at the disposal of the states in question.

This brings us to a related question of whether the coastal trade in rice was essentially the result of 'forced commercialisation' stemming from state taxation. Circumstantial evidence points strongly against this being the sole or even the single most important factor in

[48] Brennig, *Ibid.*, pp. 196–7. For Ravesteyn's account, see W.H. Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda in the early Seventeenth Century*, p. 81; for Havart's version, Daniel Havart, *Op- en Ondergang van Coromandel*, Volume III, pp. 15–16.

[49] *ANTT*, Documentos Remetidos da India (henceforth DRI), Livro 22, fls. 86v–87, and *HAG*, Monções do Reino, No. 13A, fls. 263–6; also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'The Portuguese, the port of Basrur and the rice trade, 1600–1650', *IESHR*, Volume XXI (4), 1984.

such trade. Curiously enough, both the areas on the southern Indian coastline that participated in the export of rice in considerable degree were areas where land was extensively held by privileged groups, either lightly taxed and somewhat pampered Brahmin communities, or influential institutions, temples, *mathas* and the like. At the same time, they were regions with highly stratified social structures, and a substantial proportion (perhaps 15 to 20 per cent) of untouchable castes in agrestic servitude. Such structures, when superimposed on a prosperous and productive agrarian economy, did not require to be forced by an overbearing state to participate in commercial activity. Given the existence of fairly proximate areas where a rice deficit was experienced year after year, the pattern of trade that emerged on the coastal circuit was as reasonable as it was profitable for the groups in control of the producing and exchange economy.

Overland trade: introductory remarks

In addition to the overseas and coastal trade, one finds two other forms of trade in the regional economy under consideration. On the one hand, trade using the inland waterways, on the other, the trade on pack bullocks and other means of land-bound conveyance. In contrast to northern India, where the Gangetic artery formed an important channel of trade, connecting the heartland of the *doab* to Bengal, and where the Indus system provided a distinct waterway of its own, inland waterways remained limited in southern India in the period under consideration. The sub-region in which they were of the greatest importance was the western coastal strip; both in Kanara and in Malabar, the myriad small rivers facilitated the transport of goods from points further inland to the coast, and this trade thus serviced not only exchange within the coastal segment, but the linkage to the broader world of coastal and overland trade. In the case of Kanara, rice from the upper river valleys was conventionally transported to the coast by means of these small vessels, while pepper grown in the uplands of both Malabar and Kanara found its way to the coast through the same form of conveyance. Thus, in late sixteenth century Portuguese Cochin, an important point on the annual calendar was the arrival in March of the first pepper-laden boats from the 'Serra'.[50] However, as Deloche points out, in his study of pre-modern means of transport in India,[51] fluvial navigation could never be the principal

[50] See Francisco da Costa's account, 'Relatório sobre o trato de pimenta ...', *DUP*, III, pp. 351–2.

[51] J. Deloche, *La Circulation en Inde*, n. 6, Volume I (La Voie de Terre), p. 206; Volume II (La Voie d'Eau), pp. 32–9.

means by which goods were moved in much of the southern Indian peninsula. Of the peninsular rivers (aside from those of the western coastal strip), only the Kaveri, Krishna and Godavari were capable of sustaining a traffic in goods, and that too for short distances inland from their respective mouths. Thus, in the case of a great proportion of the peninsula, the means of transport used had either to be oxen and buffalos, or – in the case of routes that crossed the western Ghats – headloads and porters. We may note however that the brief sections of the three rivers mentioned above that *were* navigable often formed part of a longer route, so that commodity movements could combine two elements, terrestrial and fluvial.

As a point of departure for the discussion of the overland trade, one may consider the recent examination of the issue by Tapan Raychaudhuri.[52] While his examination of the question effectively ignores much of peninsular India south of the Godavari, some general issues of interest do emerge. In essence, Raychaudhuri divides trade into two categories: intra-local and inter-local. Together with this, he argues for the following typology of market centres (following K.N. Chaudhuri[53]): (i) emporia for long-distance trade, inland, overland or overseas, (ii) small scale *bazaars* for local consumption, (iii) periodic fairs, (iv) isolated rural markets, a category not easily distinguishable from (ii). In succinct terms, Raychaudhuri's conception of trade is the following. Much of trade comprised 'a predominantly one-way flow of commodities from villages to towns'.[54] While there was trade in the rural areas through *hats* and *mandis*, this was limited and peripheral. The flow from villages to towns was occasioned by 'the collection of revenue in cash [which] generated a pressure to sell'. Once this flow reached the towns, it could then enter the network of inter-regional trade along the great inland arteries, but this is seen to be a circuit involving urban groups alone, and which left the rural population untouched. This was only natural, given the heavy demands of the fiscal system. 'The producer who surrendered some fifty per cent of his gross produce could have very limited scope for buying anything ... Those who as rulers, functionaries, dependants or dealers shared this surplus

[52] Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'Inland trade', in Habib and Raychaudhuri, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume I, pp. 325–59.

[53] K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660–1760*, pp. 135–44; also his earlier paper 'Markets and traders in India during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in K.N. Chaudhuri and C.J. Dewey, eds., *Economy and Society: Essays in Indian Economic and Social History*, Delhi 1979, pp. 143–62.

[54] Raychaudhuri, 'Inland trade', p. 327

provided the great bulk of the domestic demand.'[55] The economy was thus marked by a dichotomy; there existed a substantive agricultural sector, whose only real link with the wider world of the commercial economy was land-revenue payment. The 'drain theory' implicit in this conception recurs in other forms as well. Thus trade between the Gangetic *doab* and the rest of the Mughal empire was an unequal one; 'the north Indian heartland...was predominantly an importing area'. In essence then, once one turns away from initiatives on the part of the state, little by way of commercial impulses remain in such an economy. Whether or not this is true for Mughal India, southern India in the period under consideration scarcely appears to fit such a picture. As has been argued earlier, evidence on land revenue collections as a proportion of gross or net agricultural output is as scarce for southern India as it is for the north, and the sparse evidence that we have suggests a figure not in the least comparable to the 33 to 50 per cent of gross mentioned above.[56] Indeed, even in the Mughal case the leap from assessment to collection is made rather too easily in the historiography, and the fact that a diversity of *actual* regimes obtained in different parts of the Mughal empire is neglected as well. Further, as we have pointed out in the concluding section of the discussion of coastal trade, the state's coercion need not be invoked as necessary to explain commerical production; such a form of activity frequently is undertaken by groups of persons of their own accord.

To turn to an alternative conception of overland trade then, where the state's role is relegated to its rightful dimension, we turn briefly to a discussion of the historiography on mainland China. Here, the classic study by G. William Skinner,[57] stresses the importance of marketing as a participatory activity amongst the peasantry. Relying largely on oral evidence drawn from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Skinner develops the concept of a market hierarchy defined both functionally and spatially; thus, primary market centres service an area around them, with peasants marketing their produce on a given market day, which follows cycles of varying periodicity in different areas. In turn, these primary market centres

55 *Ibid.*, p. 358. These statements may be considered typical of the Aligarh-school conception of the relationship between state and economy.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 358. Even in K.N. Chaudhuri's more modest estimate, the Mughal State is declared to have taken a third of gross produce in the area under its control every year. See Chaudhuri, 'Reflections on town and country in Mughal India', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XII (1), 1978, pp. 77–96.

57 G. William Skinner, 'Marketing and social structure in rural China', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume XXIV, 1964 (in 3 parts), especially pp. 3–43, 195–228.

are linked to a larger centre, which serves as a primary market for its own environs on a particular day, 'the small market day', while servicing the needs of surrounding primary markets on another 'big' market day. This hierarchy of markets eventually comes to be linked to an administrative centre of fairly substantial dimensions or to a port, and thereby gains access to conduits through which inter-local as well inter-regional trade pass, both as exports from the producing areas, and as imports which eventually percolate to a greater or lesser extent into even the primary market centres. With detailed illustrations, Skinner points to the fact that the dimensions of the catchment area of a marketing centre are determined by terrain and prevailing transport technology; typically the peasant must be allowed time enough to go to market and return, as well as to transact his purpose, all within the space of a single working day.

Beginning with this construct, Skinner proceeds to build an ambitious edifice of social behaviour patterns as explained by market areas. In the first place, he argues, marriage circles are largely explicable in terms of marketing areas; this would serve for example to explain why peasant marriages might occur across two distant villages, but never across two proximate ones, since the first two shared a common market while the last two did not. Thus, since a peasant might be expected to visit his primary market some fifty times a year, and some 3,000 times in a lifetime, this would become *the* most important locus of his interaction with the wider world. Further, the hierarchy of markets would serve to define a hierarchy of towns; the secondary market would thus emerge as the centre of local elite interaction.[58]

The remarkable contrast between this model of Skinner (subsequently espoused by Elvin in the context of pre-modern China) – wherein marketing is seen as a spontaneous act, linking the peasant to the wider world – and that of Habib and Raychaudhuri outlined earlier could scarcely be more stark. It is interesting to note that this contrast is specifically remarked upon by Raychaudhuri; thus, he argues, '... this pattern of economic organisation [i.e. where marketing was a function of forced commercialisation] was peculiar to India rather than the whole of Asia, contrary to a still widely held belief. In China, between about 900 and 1200, informal markets became the focus of peasant life'[59] – citing Elvin as his source. We shall argue however that many elements of the Skinner model are in fact more

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Raychaudhuri, 'Inland trade', p. 327, citing Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, Stanford, 1973.

apposite in the Indian context than the rigid structure imposed by the alternative formulation, at least as far as southern India in the sixteenth and seventeenth century is concerned. Before doing so however, a brief general critique of Skinner's model is perhaps in order. It has already been observed that Skinner's arguments take into account possible distortions in the Loschian hexagonal pattern of market areas on account of unevenness of terrain. However, further distortions could be introduced by other elements, in particular by the problem of a diversity of means of transport. Thus, if a major watercourse, usable as a means of transport, were to pass through the terrain, the structure of marketing centres and areas could well suffer distortion from the gravitational pull of this alternative. The same could occur if the area under consideration were not wholly land-bound, but were bordered by the sea. Thus, the existence of ports, and overseas trade, as well as coastal navigation would tend to have a significant impact on the structure of marketing areas, hierarchies, and the distribution of centres. The dendritic structure of subordinate markets in the vicinity of a major port town would thus have to be treated as a modified version of the Skinnerian hierarchy.

Critiques have also noted that the marketing centre is not the only locus of local or supra-local interaction, stressing – in the Chinese case – other locality wide constructs such as irrigation communities. From our viewpoint, a further problem with the Skinner model (as with K.N. Chaudhuri's typology cited earlier) is that it does not take into account the coexistence of specialised and non-specialised markets, the latter dealing with a range of goods, the former specifically oriented to a single commodity group. Curiously enough, one of the rare attempts to date to marry a Skinner-type schema to the seventeenth century Indian data relates to just such a one-commodity marketing situation, the production and marketing of indigo in the Bayana region near Agra.[60] As we shall note, several instances occur in the southern India of the period, where market towns specialise, and are not all-purpose, this being reflected in the specialist character of the mercantile community as well. In the

[60] See H. Nagashima, 'Indigo production and circulation in North India during the 17th century – a study on that on the Bayana tract' (in Japanese with an English summary), *The Shirin*, LXIII (4), July 1980, pp. 527–60. For an attempt to apply Skinner's conception to southern India, see Kenneth R. Hall, 'Price-making and market hierarchy in early medieval south India', *IESHR*, Volume XIV (2), pp. 207–30, as also Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Colas*, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 124–6. The curious marriage of Skinner and Polanyi in Hall's work, as also the failure to provide adequate evidence to buttress the market hierarchy proposed, renders it problematic.

succeeding sections, we shall develop these ideas in the context of specific case studies, before turning to a consideration of long-distance overland trade routes, and to the complementarities and contradictions between overland and coastal trade.

Marketing centres and production centres

By the mid sixteenth century, southern India was characterised by a fair degree of sub-regional specialisation in productive activity. Natural conditions determined some locations; pepper for example could only be grown in the uplands of the western coastal strip, even though it was consumed all over the region, and had no substitute in many of its functions (since chilli made inroads only late in the sixteenth century, and that in limited regions). Again iron production was limited to certain areas of the western *maidan* of Mysore, and the interior Telugu regions.

Certain types of weaving were also conspicuously specialised, and concentrated on the eastern coastal strip, though extending inland in specific regions such as Coimbatore and Warangal.[61] While weaving and textile production were certainly not restricted to these specialised areas, it was here that they predominated, while other areas produced barely enough to meet local needs. It should be stressed here (this being an aspect seldom touched upon in the literature) that the spatial distribution of weaving centres varied over the broad period; thus, the rise in importance of the Salem region appears to have occurred in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.[62] To feed these looms however, raw cotton was needed, and this seems to have been produced in good measure in the textile producing regions themselves. The black soil of the Arcot area for example was suitable for such activity, and cotton appears to have been produced in various parts of south-eastern India, from Tirunelveli in the extreme south to the Krishna-Godavari region in the north. With the expansion of textile production however, the requirements in northern Coromandel seem to have outstripped local availability. Thus, Joseph Brennig notes that from the 1630s on,

[61] On the distribution of weaving centres, see Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India*, as also K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia*, pp. 244–6.

[62] On the Salem region in the early eighteenth century, see for example Bhaskar Jyoti Basu, 'The trading world of the southern Coromandel and the crisis of the 1730s', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 42nd Session, Bodh-Gaya, 1981, pp. 333–9.

there begins a large-scale overland trade in raw cotton from the central Deccan to this region, carried on pack bullocks by *banjaras*. This, he argues, replaced an older and far more limited terrestrial-cum-fluvial trade, carried on the craft called *ballegats* down the Krishna and Godavari, into the region.[63] Importantly, this cotton was carried to specific markets which served to supply the region. To the north-east, at the head of the Godavari delta, the major markets were Rajahmundry and Vemagiri, while closer to Palakollu (the major VOC textile procurement centre, located near Narsapur) the cotton was marketed at Teeparu. Indeed, Dutch records stress that these were specialist cotton markets, whereas in other areas such as the Krishna delta farther south, cotton was sold in more general markets.[64]

Such examples could be multiplied; an instance is that of Makkapeta, south of Khammam, which in 1682 had a population of around 6,000 (i.e. 1,235 households). This town was regarded as a specialist centre for the distribution of imported goods, with just under a half of its households (550) being merchants, besides which the town had an unusually large number of gold- and silversmith households (twenty in all).[65] Again, in the early 1620s, we hear from the Dutch of a town called 'Peta' (possibly Ayyampettai) located in the environs of Tanjavur. This is described as follows:

> Peta has from olden times been, and even today is, a substantial market town [treffelijcke coopstadt]. All the pepper from the Mallabaer coast that is brought into the lands of Tanjouer is brought to market here, so that Peta brings to the Nayaks of Tanjouer a revenue of 500 rials a day in tolls. It lies a good two days journey from Trangebare, where the Danes have a fort now, and the Danes get a great quantity of pepper yearly from there.[66]

While the place itself is no more than tentatively identifiable, the name used by the VOC factor is in fact a generic one, *pettai* being to the Tamil and Telugu region what *ganj* might be to the Gangetic heartland. Thus, corresponding to the hierarchy of *hat-ganj-qasbah* developed in the latter context for the eighteenth century, we may now investigate the existence of parallel structures in the southern India of the seventeenth century.

The obvious equivalents of the hierarchy mentioned above would

[63] Brennig, 'The textile trade', pp. 229–36, citing Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda*, p. 68.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 235–6. [65] *Ibid.*, pp. 148–9.
[66] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 199. The town of Ayyampettai is located to the south-east of Tiruvalur.

be the *santai* (periodic market) and the *pettai* or *patnam*, the fixed market centre. Yet, since such fixed market centres are often associated with the centres of local elites, these might also gravitate to the *palaiyams* which dotted the southern Indian landscape in the period.[67] In the context of south-west Karnataka in the early seventeenth century, such centres as Periyapatnam, Narsipur, Chikkanyakanhalli, Basavapatnam, Hasti, Chikballapur and Gummanayakanapalaiyam would constitute this level, centering around a more substantial seat of population such as Srirangapatnam, or later Mysore.[68] The most detailed profile of such centres is available, however, once again for the Krishna-Godavari region in the VOC records of the 1680s. Given the population density of the region and the difficulties in strictly defining urban centres, one may use Bayly's rule of thumb to demarcate the larger marketing centre from the smaller village or production centre;[69] thus, centres with over 600 households (or a population of 3,000) can be treated as parallel to the *qasbahs* of northern India. For the Krishna-Godavari region in the 1680s, we have detailed information on five centres: Makkapeta (already mentioned earlier), Nagulvancha, Palakollu, Golepallem and Gondewaram. Of these, Makkapeta, Nagulvancha and Palakollu can clearly be included in the category of *qasbah*-type structures, with 1,235, 690 and 948 households respectively. Golepallem and Gondewaram, on which more detailed information is available, were clearly of smaller dimensions; while the former had 1,071 residents in 1692, the latter had no more than 431.[70] What is particularly remarkable about these centres is the diversity in their occupational structure. Thus taking into account the more important groups, the occupational structure of the households in the five is as shown in Table 2.3.[71]

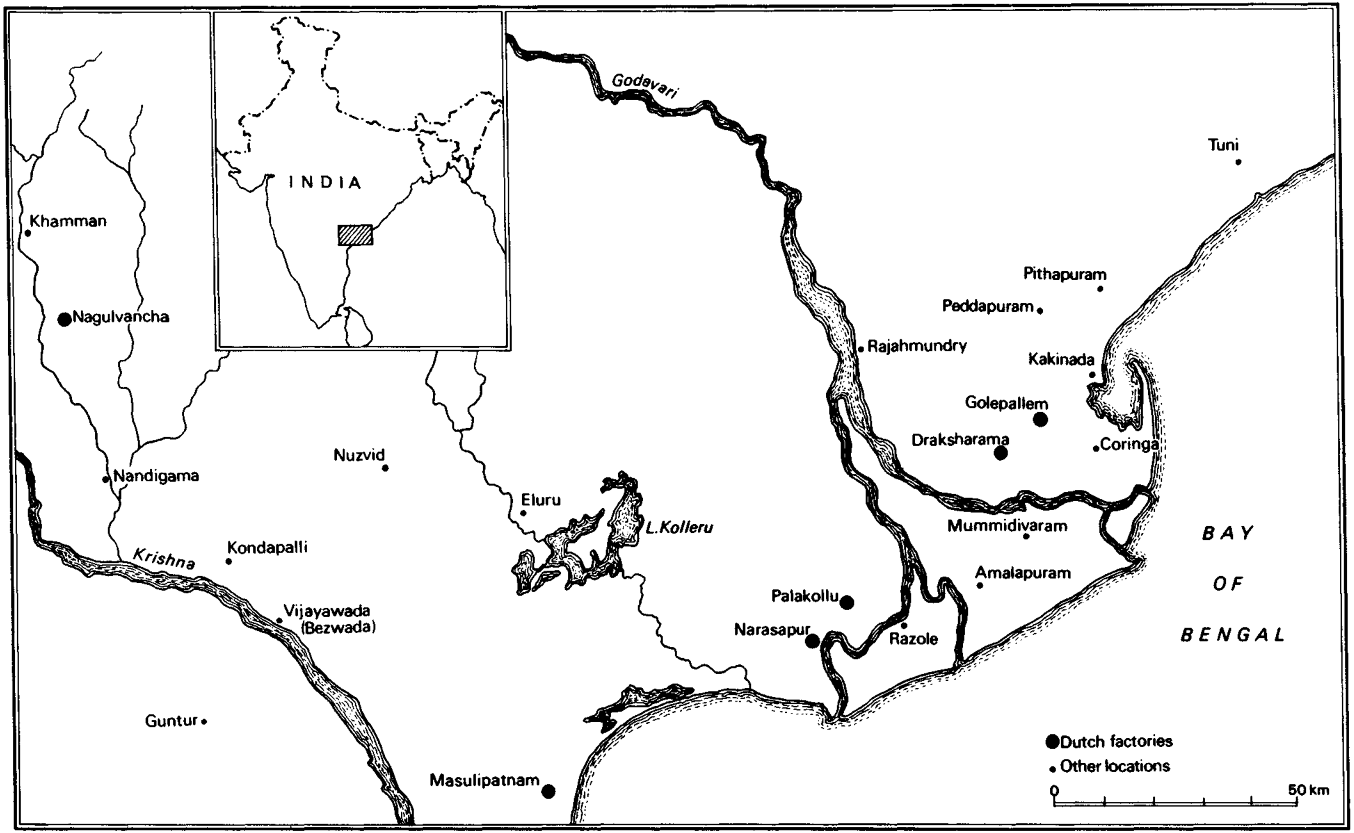
[67] Burton Stein, 'Towns and cities: the far south', in Habib and Raychaudhuri, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume I, pp. 456–7.

[68] C. Hayavadana Rao, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Volume II, Part IV, Bangalore, 1930, pp. 2423–5. Also see P.B. Ramachandra Rao, *The Poligars of Mysore and their Civilisation*, Bangalore, 1943, pp. 7–9, *passim*.

[69] For an excellent recent discussion of the *qasbah* and its place in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century Indo-Gangetic plains economy, C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, Chapter IX, pp. 346–8, *passim*; for an early pioneering work on this, see B.R. Grover, 'An integrated pattern of commercial life in the rural society of north India duirng the 17th-18th centuries', *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, Volume XXXVII, 1966, pp. 121–53.

[70] On Palakollu, Makkapeta and Nagulvancha, see Brennig, 'The textile trade', Appendix B, pp. 290–2; on Golepallem and Gondewaram, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1511, fls. 1154–7, 1160–3.

[71] We may note however that the enumeration for Palakollu remained incomplete. Those excluded were households of Brahmins, actors, acrobats, temple-dancers and prostitutes, and untouchables.



Map 3 Weaving centres of seventeenth-century north Coromandel

Table 2.3. *Occupational Distribution of five north Coromandel centres* (late seventeenth century)

Occupation	Pkl.	Ngv.	Mkp.	Gpm.[a]	Gwm[a]
Weavers	176	150	100	82	14
Washers	35	20	20	6	74
Painters	206	—	—	56	—
Landed Agriculturalists	99	80	200	11	1
Goldsmiths	20	15	20	5	—
Textile Merchants	110	130	150	11	—
Brahmins	?	150	20	3	—
Drovers	10	—	100	—	—
Pions	22	45	150	9	1
Untouchables	?	30	50	10	1
Other merchants	56	13	400	5	—
Others	64	37	25	51	—
TOTAL	848	690	1235	249	91

Notes:
Palakollu = Pkl.; Nagulvancha = Ngv.; Makkapeta = Mkp.; Golepallem = Gpm.; Gondewaram = Gwm.
[a] refers to 1692, the others to 1682.
Source: See note 70.

Of these five, the first is in the west Godavari delta and the last two in the Kakinada *taluka* of east Godavari, while Nagulvancha and Makkapeta lie close to one another, north-west of Bezwada, and south of Khammam. All these places lie however within a radius of roughly 80 kilometres. What immediately strikes one about these centres is their close relation, in one form or the other, to textile production. But this is only natural and the VOC factors collected information about them for precisely this reason. It is also of some importance to note the imbalance in occupational profile even within the set of activities related to textile production: thus Palakollu was clearly a centre of *kalamkari* which serviced other weaving centres as well, given the disproportionately high number of 'painter' households. Equally remarkable is Gondewaram in east Godavari, clearly a specialised centre for the washing and dyeing of textiles. It also becomes apparent that the smaller villages such as Gondewaram could not support a goldsmith (who incidentally also doubled usually as money-changer), while the larger centre in the vicinity, Golepallem, boasted not only five gold – and silversmith households, but one *sarangi* player, and eight households of dancing girls (whom the Dutch simply designate 'hoeren'). An obligatory member of the

larger village seems to have been the betel seller, and we also find tobacco sellers in four of the five centres surveyed, testimony to the pervasiveness of this New World crop.

The extremely detailed records for Golepallem and Gondewaram in 1692 reveal to us further important aspects of rural political economy. In the former centre, we find sizeable disparities within the group of landed cultivators, in terms of various indicators such as household size and composition, and the number of milch cattle and plough cattle that each had. At the prosperous end of the spectrum are the households of Kotapalli Akkanna, Sipadi Periyya, and particularly Kottugullapudi Appanna, the first two with larger (three men) households than the norm, but with a disproportionately large number of livestock. Thus Akkanna's household – with two separate buildings – comprised three men, and two women, but no children, and owned twelve oxen, sixteen milch-cows and fifteen calves, together with four milch buffaloes, four plough buffaloes, and four calves.[72] At the other end of the spectrum among landed cultivators, one finds the household comprising a man, Kottugullapudi Niladri, his wife, four children, a single roof, and no livestock. Again a survey of artisan (and in particular weaver) households yields clear indications of differential asset holdings, with one remarkable Kaikkola household – a man, his wife and two children – the owners of eight cows, sixteen calves, two milch-buffaloes, and two buffalo calves.[73] Not to belabour a point, such households as these would have had surplus produce to sell without being coerced into it by either State or distress.

There are naturally problems in generalising from this evidence, given that it stems from an area that had one of the most developed commercial networks in all of southern India, with possibly only the western coastal strip and the Kaveri delta able to compare with it in these terms. Nonetheless, in the absence of comparable evidence not only for other parts of southern India but for northern India in the period as well, we may at least conclude that the picture of the *qasbah* and the intermediate market town network, supporting a burgeoning commercial economy was not necessarily restricted to the late eighteenth century Gangetic valley. Nor was trade at the local level the simplistic 'one-way flow of commodities from the villages to the towns, a corollary of rural self-sufficiency', as one encounters it

[72] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1511, fls. 1135–42.
[73] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1511, fls. 1135–42; for a discussion of inequalities among weaver households in the period, see Brennig, 'The textile trade', pp. 265–8.

portrayed by Raychaudhuri.[74] When producers had surpluses to sell, they sold them, and this was by no means uncommon. This leads us naturally enough to the next question: if rural producers were indeed paid for the produce they sold (or for a substantial part of it), and if this payment did not simply drain away into the towns as fiscal dues, what was imported into the rural economy? Given the character of these north Coromandel centres, we see that in fact a large proportion of activity was oriented marketward, as not only textiles but even indigo (the second crop in terms of importance after rice) was essentially a commercial product. We know that the west Godavari area was – according to Brennig's evidence – a net importer of rice by the late seventeenth century.[75] While this serves to explain a part of the exchange, and imports of tobacco, betel, and other commodities serve to explain another, we may note that gold- and silversmiths, as well as copper-workers existed in fair numbers in four of these five centres. For a place with 850-odd households, such as Palakollu in 1682, to have as many as twenty goldsmith households is suggestive, and the figures for other Krishna-Godavari centres surveyed is little different. Even lowly Golepallem had five goldsmith households in 1692, and these were prosperous ones, four out of five owning milch cattle, and one in particular very well endowed indeed, with six oxen, four milch-cows, six calves, a milch-buffalo and its calf.[76] Thus, it is perhaps worthwhile to reconsider the conventional image of the export of goods against bullion that enters the coffers of the Sultans and their courtiers, for it would appear that bullion found a use even in the relatively small towns and rurban areas of the Krishna-Godavari region.[77]

Overland networks: commodity and financial flows

As has already been noted, riverborne traffic was limited in southern India to short stretches close to the mouths of the rivers Kaveri,

[74] In fact, the failure in Raychaudhuri's essay, 'Inland trade', to cite the work of Grover, 'An integrated pattern,' n. 67 is remarkable, since the latter contains an implicit, though not fully developed, refutation of the Aligarh view.

[75] Brennig, 'The textile trade', pp. 208–9.

[76] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1511, fls. 1135–42, 1154–7.

[77] The image propounded in such works as Dietmar Rothermund, *Asian Trade and European Expansion in the Age of Mercantilism*, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 134–6, thus needs to be reconsidered. The work of Frank Perlin on money-use, though based on a limited documentary base, suggests however an interesting new avenue to be explored. See for example Perlin, 'Money-use in late pre-colonial India and the international trade in currency media', in J.F. Richards, ed., *Imperial Monetary System of Mughal India*, Delhi, 1987, pp. 232–373.

Krishna, and Godavari, and along the smaller rivers that criss-crossed the western coastal strip. For the rest, trade overland was the rule, and the dominant mode of transport in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the pack-bullock. Wheeled traffic, as numerous travellers have pointed out, was almost unknown, and we have for example Tavernier's testimony on this question on the major trans-peninsular route, from Surat to Golconda, and then to Masulipatnam.[78] In certain areas, particularly where the major routes traversed the western Ghats over narrow passes, even pack-oxen had to be abandoned and recourse taken to headloads and bamboo *kavadis*. The accompanying map shows the major arteries of trade in the peninsula in the period from 1550 to 1650. As it demonstrates however, large parts of the peninsula were left untouched by these arterial connections, which limited themselves to certain segments. The authoritative study of the problem of overland trade routes by Jean Deloche[79] permits us a two point evaluation, the first from the second half of the sixteenth century, and the other from the late eighteenth century. In the earlier of the two, that is the mid sixteenth century, we note first the major transversal link extending from Bhatkal to Vijayanagara in the interior. An important extension led south-east from Vijayanagara through Penugonda and Chandragiri to Pulicat. Other routes of significance (though these would seem to have been on the decline by about 1550) were the direct route from Goa to Vijayanagara via Bankapur, and two north-eastward transversal routes radiating from Vijayanagara, the one to Raichur, Kovilkonda, and Golconda, the other to Udayagiri, Kondavidu and Kondapalli. Thus, without exaggeration, one might say that almost all the major terrestrial arteries in the northern section of South India involved the centre of Vijayanagara in one way or another. Further south however, there were routes with a different logic. One of these passed from Kayamkulam to Tirunelveli and Madurai, but others equally linked central Malabar to Tanjavur and Senji via the Palaghat gap.

Between 1550 and 1650, however, some changes of importance occurred in this network of arteries. A good proportion of these changes resulted from the decline of Vijayanagara as a centre of consumption and of redistribution; thus, a system which had as its

[78] See V. Ball and W. Crooke, trans. and ed., *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne*, 2 Volumes, reprint New Delhi, 1977, Volume I.

[79] The accompanying map and discussion are based in good measure on J. Deloche, *La Circulation en Inde*, Volume I, pp. 64–71, 75–82, Maps X, XI. But also see H.K. Sherwani., *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 493–502.

gravitational centre this major urban locus needed now to reorient itself.[80] The results of this change were naturally felt far more in the northern section of our region than in the far south. By all accounts, the Pałaghat route continued, and was if anything strengthened by the first quarter of the seventeenth century. So too, the Tirunelveli-Kayamkulam nexus continued without significant alteration.[81] The changes occurred principally with respect to a new and major transpeninsular route (or rather set of routes). To outline these routes, one set extended from Dabhol and Chaul on the west coast to Gulbarga and Hyderabad, passing eventually to the important staging-point of Bezwada and then on to Masulipatnam. Other variants of significance extended westward from Hyderabad to Bijapur and then to Goa, while an artery of particular importance was that from Hyderabad to Surat through one of two possible routes: the northerly one through Burhanpur, or the other through Daulatabad. From the first half of the seventeenth century, detailed accounts of all these routes are available. In the close of our period, around 1650, we have Tavernier's well-thumbed travelogue,[82] but earlier and less well-known accounts are as useful. These include Andrew Cogan's description of a journey from Goa to Golconda and Masulipatnam in the 1630s,[83] and the detailed journals of Pieter van den Broecke and Pieter Gilliesz van Ravesteyn in the second decade of the seventeenth century.[84] Since the day to day details of such journeys are tedious and repetitive (and not particularly germane to the issue), it would appear sufficient to note the outlines of one of these, that of Pieter van den Broecke in 1617. Van den Broecke left Surat on 29 October 1617, and reached Golconda on 8 December and Masulipatnam on the 24th of the same month. We cannot regard his

[80] See the letter from Filippo Sassetti to Bernardo Davanzati, dated 9 November 1585, in Ettore Marcucci, ed., *Lettere edite e inedite di Filippo Sassetti*, pp. 341–51, especially 342–3. For a more general discussion of the decline of Vijayanagara city and the general character of large pre-modern Indian cities, see V.D. Divekar, 'Political factors in the rise and decline of cities in pre-British India – with special reference to Pune', in J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, eds., *Studies in Urban History*, Amritsar, 1980, pp. 91–106.

[81] For a discussion of the trade in pepper from Malabar to Madurai, Tanjavur etc., see Chapter 4 below.

[82] Ball and Crooke, eds., *Travels in India*; also see the slightly later account by Thevenot in S.N. Sen, ed., *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, New Delhi, 1949, especially pp. 130–52.

[83] For Cogan's journey, see W. Foster, ed., *The English Factories in India, 1637–41*, Oxford, 1912, pp. 143–4, 161–4.

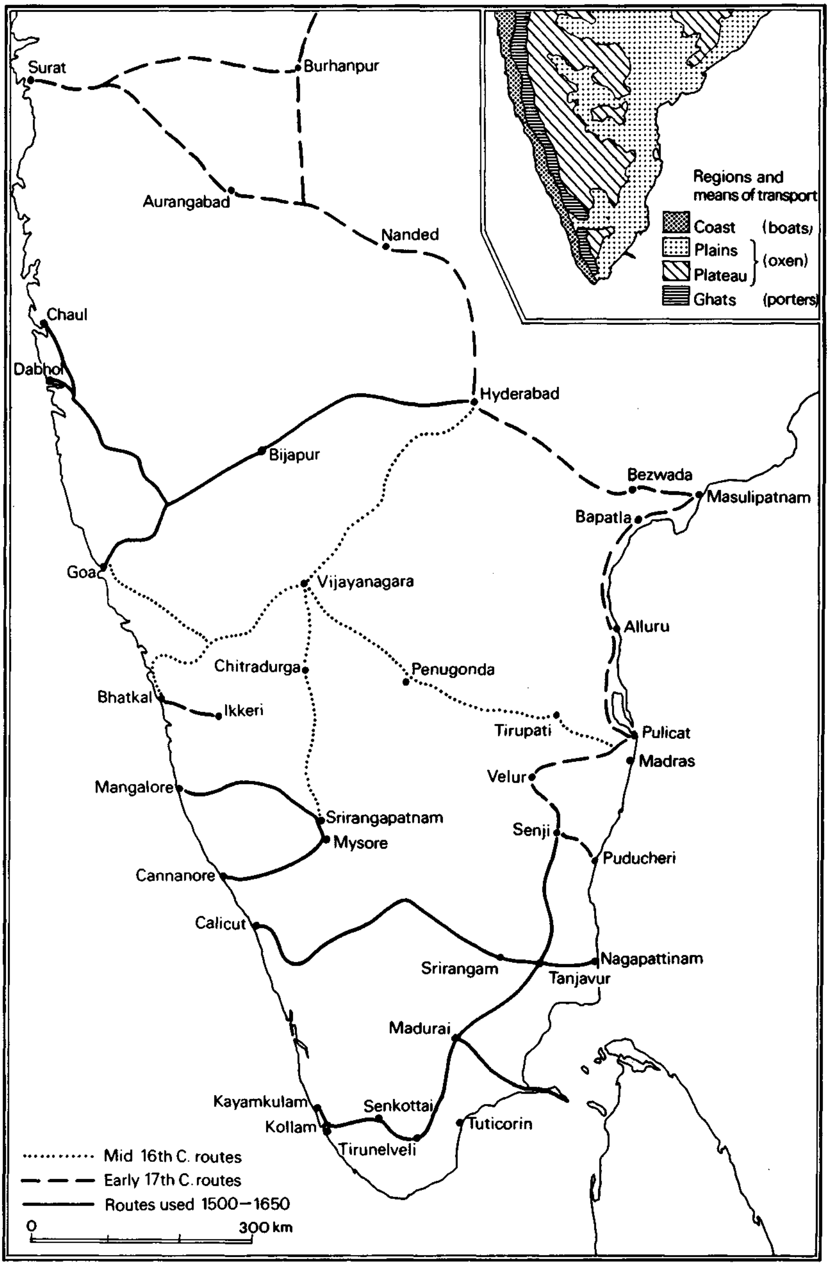
[84] For Ravesteyn's journey, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 186–8, 239–46; on van den Broecke, the excellent published edition by W. Ph. Coolhaas, *Pieter van den Broecke in Azië*, 2 Volumes, The Hague, 1962–63, Volume I, pp. 135–63.

journey, replete with numerous stops and courtesy visits to local nobility at principal points, as a typical commercial journey, and the time taken by him to traverse the entire distance (fifty-six days) is far in excess of what the ordinary trading *qafila* would have taken. While estimates vary, normal travelling times appear to have been as follows:

Golconda to Masulipatnam: 7 days
Golconda to Surat: 28 days (via Daulatabad)
Golconda to Bijapur: 9 days
Golconda to Goa: 17 days

We may note that the relatively unencumbered *pattamars* (or runners) reduced this travelling time considerably; thus communication from Surat to Masulipatnam was possible in twenty-four days, or two-thirds the time taken by a *qafila* at its fastest. In fact, the Dutch factor Pieter Gilliesz van Ravesteyn, using the Daulatabad route rather than the longer one via Burhanpur, seems to have made the trip in forty days in 1615.[85] The principal feature of this set of routes was that it linked the southern India economy with, on the one hand, the west coast, and on the other with the northern India heartland, via Burhanpur. By all accounts, however, both commodity and financial flows on the first set of routes greatly exceeded those on the second, even though the balance seems to have shifted towards the close of our period (i.e. *circa* 1650). The development of this link seems to have been given a fillip from about 1570 on. The decades from 1570 to 1600 saw the integration of the Krishna and Godavari delta regions with Golconda and Hyderabad, and this in turn fuelled trade further west and north-west. A conspicuous item of this trade were the diamonds of Golconda, mined near Udayagiri, and purchased on a regular basis by merchants from Burhanpur, Surat, Dabhol and Goa in the early seventeenth century. Yet the glitter and glamour of this trade has tended to obscure the importance of the trade from the Masulipatnam and Warangal regions to Dabhol and Surat in another important commodity – textiles. The Persian market for Masulipatnam and Warangal textiles existed from late in the sixteenth century. This could be partly met through the sea route from the 1590s, when the Masulipatnam vessels began to ply to Mocha, and put in en route at Dabhol or the south Arabian coast. However, the bulk of the demand continued to be met via the overland trade, and this trade persisted even in the 1640s, when the direct sea-link from

[85] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 239–46.



Map 4 Major inland trading arteries

Masulipatnam to Bandar Abbas had been in existence for over a decade.[86] Another important commodity for the overland trade linking the north Coromandel region to the Persian market was indigo, grown in the Godavari delta as well as to the south-west near Nagulvancha, and in Cuddapah. Here, from as early as 1610, we note complaints from the Dutch factors of competition from Persia-based merchants in the procurement, and this is a theme that recurs in van Ravesteyn's somewhat later account too.[87]

This major transversal route at the northern fringes of the region thus served an important function, and, besides the commodity trade, it was only natural that the passage of bills of exchange on these routes – from Goa, Dabhol and Surat, to Golconda and Masulipatnam – should occur. For a good part of the 1620s and 1630s, financial transfers from Surat to Masulipatnam were effected by the English Company by means of just such *hundis*, and we have evidence of equivalent transfers in the 1640s from Goa to Golconda.[88] It is well-known too that prominent Surat-based merchants such as Virji Vorah maintained factors at Masulipatnam, and equally we note Mir Kamaluddin's financial and personal network, which extended on the one hand, to Pipli, and on the other to Daulatabad, Bijapur and Surat.[89] Thus, the *hundi* system that one observes in operation in the Surat-Agra nexus (and which has recently been studied in detail by H.W. van Santen)[90] extended as well into southern India. Yet the extent of this integration, by means of both commodity flow and financial transfer, is brought into question by a puzzling fact, namely the persistence of a substantial difference in the exchange ratios of the three principal coinage metals (gold, silver and copper) between northern and southern India throughout the period under considera-

86 See the Surat shipping list of 1647 in *AR*, OB, VOC 1166, fls. 797–805.

87 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1055 (loose papers) Jan van Wesick and Antonio Schorer at Masulipatnam to Bantam; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1062, fls. 45v-46v, 2 March 1615; VOC. 1113, fls. 316-v, 325-v; VOC. 1119, fl. 1101. Also see W.H. Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda*, pp. 35–6, 79–80.

88 See Foster, ed., *The English Factories in India*, 13 Volumes, Oxford, 1906–27 (henceforth cited as *EFI*), *EFI [1624–29]*, pp. 325–9, *passim*. On transfers from Goa to Golconda in the late 1640s, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1171, fls. 550v; VOC. 1172, fl. 571.

89 A detailed discussion of Mir Kamaluddin's activities may be encountered in Chapter 6, below. for his trade overland, see *inter alia*, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 239–42 *passim*.

90 H.W. van Santen, 'De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620–1660', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Leiden, 1982, pp. 117–26, 223–9.

tion. Given the paucity of exact quantitative data from the sixteenth century, we shall restrict our remarks on the question largely to the seventeenth century. Here, it emerges that – as Moreland remarked over a half-century ago – the relative price of gold to silver rises sharply in southern India. There appear to be three phases to this rise – the first around 1620, the second later in the 1620s, and the third late in the 1630s. As a consequence, the exchange rate between gold and silver at Masulipatnam in the early 1640s rises to about 17.2 to 17.5:1, a marked contrast to the Surat ratio for the period, calculated by Joseph J. Brennig for the corresponding period at 14.2 to 14.3:1.[91] In the case of Mughal India, historians conventionally note two phases of sharp increase in the bi-metallic ratio. The first, in the early 1630s, sees the gold *muhr* appreciating by 50 per cent in respect of the rupee, while at the same time copper *dams* too appreciate to a corresponding extent (i.e. 50 to 60 per cent) relative to silver. Later, in about 1660, it is argued that copper appreciates substantially *vis-à-vis* silver again (the extent of the rise being 60 per cent or so), while gold to silver ratios see little change.[92] The above figures, presented by Irfan Habib, are modified somewhat by Brennig in a recent study.[93] He argues that 'in general, the price series of copper [relative to silver] resembles that of gold'. From 1595 to 1615, copper to silver ratios in Mughal India are stable. They begin to rise at Surat from 1619 on, peaking in the 1620s, and declining thereafter. There is then a slight recovery in the 1640s, followed by a still sharper rise in the 1650s and 1660s, and then a drastic fall. In southern India, the case turns out to be somewhat different. At least one period of the appreciation of gold and copper with respect to silver parallels that in Mughal India, namely the early 1620s. However while the gold price of copper shows a remarkable stability through the period, with fluctuations around a stable mean, gold (and consequently copper) continues to appreciate in respect to silver. Further, at the end of the period 1600–50, gold:silver ratios in

91 For gold to silver ratios at Masulipatnam, see *AR*, Collectie Geleynssen de Jonghe, 1.10.30, No. 230, current prices at Masulipatnam, 28 November 1640 to 31 October 1642, and *AR*, OB, VOC. 1172, fl. 502, a quotation dated October 1648; for Surat ratios, Joseph J. Brennig, 'Silver in seventeenth-century Surat: monetary circulation and the price revolution in Mughal India', in J.F. Richards, ed., *Precious Metals in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, Durham, 1983, pp. 477–96.

92 Habib, 'Monetary system and prices', in Habib and Raychaudhuri, eds., *Cambridge Economic History*, Volume I, pp. 366–71.

93 Brennig, 'Silver in seventeenth-century Surat', pp. 490–3. For a critical review of the evidence, also see Om Prakash, 'Precious metal flows, coinage and prices in India in the 17th and the early 18th century', *Conference on Production and Transfer of Precious Metals*..., Tokyo, 8–10 June, 1987.

southern India (with all prices referred to being for Masulipatnam) show no tendency towards equalisation with that of Surat. Now, given the relative values, one might normally expect a flight of gold from north to south and of silver in the reverse direction. Indeed, the Dutch and English East India Companies quickly came to realise this, and attempted to ensure that the profile of their bullion imports into the two regions were kept more or less distinct, the south Indian region being the principal destination for gold, the north Indian (which is to say the Gujarat and Bengal factories) for silver. In the case of Gujarat, though, it turns out that imports by the Dutch of silver were not particularly substantial in the period, a major item however being copper. This metal was – in contrast to the other two – imported more or less indifferently into the two regions. In the case of silver, however, we do find the English importing fair quantities of *rials* into southern India in certain sub-periods, but this was simply because they did not have the superior access to gold enjoyed by the VOC. The VOC from the 1630s, in particular, tapped the Chinese and Japanese production of silver, gold and copper, thus supplementing the supplies they received from Europe.[94] The enormous invoice values of single Dutch ships arriving at the coast of Coromandel in the 1630s (which were frequently in excess of f. 600,000) is explicable in terms of the nature of their cargo, which was largely gold.[95] Yet, despite these substantial imports, there is no perceptible tendency towards the equalisation of bi-metallic ratios in north and south India, suggesting that the *increment* to bullion stocks that these inflows represented was not all that substantial. Further, there is some scanty evidence from the early seventeenth century to show that bi-metallic ratios diverged even within southern India, with gold being less valuable relative to silver on the Malabar coast markets than on Coromandel.[96] Yet, what demarcates the region in its entirety is that, even given the spectrum of ratios that existed in southern India, all of these valued gold relative to silver well above the price ratio that obtained in the northern India markets. That these did not converge of necessity across the two regions, is testimony to the obvious: the imperfect integration of the two

[94] For a general discussion of this question, see Kristof Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620–1740*, 2nd edition, The Hague, 1981; also A. Kobata, 'The production and uses of gold and silver in 16th and 17th century Japan', *The Economic History Review* (2nd Series), Volume XVIII, August 1985, pp. 245–66.

[95] For example, the cargo of the ship *Lillo* in 1643, was worth over f. 600,000 on arrival at Coromandel. *AR*, OB, VOC. 1147, fl. 543.

[96] For gold to silver ratios on the Malabar coast in around 1650, see *AR*, OB, VOC, 1187, fls. 717–18.

economies. The fragmentation persisted too within southern India, yet we must be careful not to exaggerate its dimensions. Thus, the following remark in a letter from Dutch factors Jan van Wesick and Anthonio Schorer at Masulipatnam in November 1610 is revealing: 'Further [they write] we came to know some days ago here that a ship from Manila laden with Chinese goods and cloves has arrived at Cochin, on account of which the price of cloves at Golconda has fallen to twelve *pagodas*, and the Chinese goods too are sold at a lower price.'[97]

We have already remarked on the reorientation of the great overland arteries in the late sixteenth century, which saw some of the old networks dismantled and other new ones installed. Of some of these changes, we know but little, such as for instance the overland trade involving Srirangapatnam and Mysore. We are aware though that, to the west, Basrur, Bhatkal and Honawar became linked to Ikkeri, and we see a parallel development in the south-east, with the centres of Madurai, Tanjavur, Senji and Chandragiri growing in importance towards the close of the sixteenth century. These centres, of an essentially courtly and administrative character, sought links with the coast, Tanjavur with Nagapattinam, Senji with Porto Novo and Devanamapattinam, and Chandragiri and Velur with São Tomé, and later Pulicat. This was in some sense the result of military pressures; the importation of horses and elephants necessitated a connection with the coast. The closer integration of the Senji region into the broader world of overland trade becomes apparent from the second decade of the seventeenth century. The discovery of new diamond mines at Banganapalli interested the VOC, who sent a factor, Willem den Dorst, to investigate it. His report, dated December 1615, mentions Velur and Senji itself as major centres of the new trade. Thus, merchants from Bijapur and Goa arrived there and either took up residence temporarily, or employed agents resident there, 'who are mostly Brahmins'.[98] The boom subsided soon enough when the mine was played out, the brief florescence showed the flexibility of the structure and its ability to handle sizeable transactions, such as those in diamonds undoubtedly were.

[97] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1055, van Wesick and Schorer to Bantam, November 1610, 'Voorder hebbe over eenighe daeghen alhier verstaen een scheepken uit Manillanen meest met nagelen ende voorder met Chinese waeren geladen in Cotchijn gearriveert waerdoor altans de naegelen in Golconda a 12 pagoden ende de Chinese waeren mede tot lager prijs vercocht waren'.

[98] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 90–1, 'Informatie opt stuck van den handel in Diamanten tot Chingier genomen door den oppercoopman Willem den Dorst, Tierepopelier 14. Dec. 1615'. Also see VOC. 317 for a reproduction of the same account.

While cities like Senji, essentially administrative centres, which grew in importance from the late sixteenth century, provided an infrastructure for such commercial activities, other sizeable financial centres, such as Bezwada, located at a crucial point, commanding the head of the Krishna delta, were centres of the riverine trade on the one hand, and the upland trade on the other. The importance of Bezwada merchants in textile and indigo procurement in the Krishna-Godavari region is referred to on numerous occasions in the Dutch records of the period; typical of this were the 1630s, when the competitive instinct of the Dutch factors was particularly high, with procurement shrinking on account of an agrarian crisis.[99] Still another type of centre, of particular importance for financial and bullion transactions, was the temple town, of which the prime example in the period was Tirumala in southern Andhra. From the last decade of the sixteenth century until the mid seventeenth century, the fortunes of this centre – in its financial and trading role – were further helped by the residence of the titular Vijayanagara emperor at Chandragiri, only a few miles distant from the principal shrine. However, already in the late sixteenth century, Tirumala had emerged as one of the major centres not only of pilgrimage, devotion and worship, but of financial transaction. By this period, the temple trustees held either partial or complete fiscal and proprietary rights (in the limited sense that the latter existed) over more than 150 villages, which had been given to the temple as either gifts or conditional grants by a diversity of groups and individuals, some state associated, some not. The bulk of such donations were made from the mid fourteenth century on, though the earliest dates back to the late tenth century, and there are a few to be encountered in the mid thirteenth and early fourteenth century.[100] The accelerated acquisition of the *devadana* rights appears to have occurred from the mid fifteenth century, during the reign of Saluva Narasimha at Vijayanagara. A second spurt occurs in the early sixteenth century, under the patronage of Krishna Deva Raya, and continues into the middle of that century.

The greater part of the villages on which rights (either proprietary, fiscal or both) were held by the temple, lay in its immediate

[99] For examples, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fl. 1123, letter dated 8 October 1636, *passim*.

[100] Subrahmanya Sastry, *Report on the Inscriptions of the Devasthanam Collection*, Madras, 1930, pp. 32–42. Also see Burton Stein, 'The economic function of a medieval south Indian Temple', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume XIX, 1959–60, pp. 163–76.

vicinity, in northern Tamilnadu and southern Andhra. Yet a significant proportion did not, some lying as far north as Addanki, 230 kilometres from Tirumala, on the banks of the river Gundalakamma.[101] Still others lay to the south, and at least some grants were from the Arcot region, such as one of five villages made in 1535, by one Pilai-Poruttar.[102] Of still greater interest are grants of villages in the Tirunelveli region, among which are two dated 1535 and 1557 respectively. The text of a *silasasanam* dated 14 September 1557 acknowledges the latter grant in the following terms:

> Since you have granted the second half of the village Kulayapattam situated on the bank of river Tamraparni in the province of Tiruvadi rajyam, yielding an annual income of 350 rekhai-pon for the benefit of the temple-treasury of Sri Venkatesa, as the first half of the same village was already granted by you for the purpose of conducting Margali-nirattam festival, Friday festival etc. to Sudikkodutta-Nachchiyar enshrined in Tirupati, and we, the trustees of Tirumalai temple are authorised to collect the income from this second half of the village, your ubhaiyam shall be conducted both at Tirumalai and Tirupati as described below.... In this manner this charity shall continue to be in force throughout the succession of your descendants as long as the sun and the moon shine.
>
> With the permission of the Srivaishnavas, this document is written by the temple accountant, Tiruninra-ur-udaiyan. May this the Srivaishnavas protect![103]

Thus, we observe the temple trustees taking upon themselves the collection of a proportion of the surplus from a village some 550 to 600 kilometres distant from the temple. This could only have been managed if channels of remittance existed, permitting funds to travel this distance on a regular basis, whether after every harvest or annually. Thus, by dint of its character as a centre with financial interests spread over a large proportion of the Telugu and Tamil country–from the Krishna delta to the Tamraparani valley–the Tirupati temple assumed a certain significance as a financial clearing house. It is obvious that this was not a feature peculiar to this temple town, for, while in the period under consideration, this temple was

[101] Donation by Rayasam Timmarasayyar, in September 1538 of three villages, Chirala, Perala and Andupalli, *Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanam Inscriptions* (henceforth *TTDI*), Volume IV [1530–42], Madras, 1936, No. 111, pp. 207–8.

[102] Donation by Pilai Poruttar in 1535 (exact date unknown), *TTDI*, Volume IV, No. 48, pp. 94–5.

[103] On the grant of the village Panchavanmadavi in December 1535 by Malaiyappar-ayyan, see *TTDI*, Volume IV, No. 61, pp. 119–20. The later grant from 1557, is recorded in a *silasasanam* reproduced in *TTDI*, Volume V (1541–74), No. 158, pp. 417–18.

possibly one of the best endowed, several of the larger temples and *mathas*, such as those at Madurai, Srirangam, and Kanchipuram, are likely to have displayed similar features.[104]

The financial role of the Tirumala-Tirupati complex is confirmed from an unexpected source, the letters of the VOC factors on Coromandel in the first half of the seventeenth century. Both the merchant Achyutappa and his relatives who dealt with the Dutch had close contacts with this centre, given their frequent visits to nearby Chandragiri. In a letter from Pulicat to Batavia of October 1636, we read, 'To obtain a greater return on Masulipatnam *pagodas*, it is our intention to change a good quantity of it against silver at the coming festival at Tirupati, in order to send it in place of gold to Masulipatnam, to which end I have sent four thousand *pagodas* with Sesadra, cousin of Malaya, to Tirupati; we were given hopes that a great quantity [of silver] would be available at this festival.'[105] A similar transaction of some years earlier had focused on a different aspect: the exchange of Pulicat *pagodas* for those of Masulipatnam (which were worth 7 per cent more), and had also been conducted through the same family. It would appear then that Tirupati (like Kanchipuram in the mid sixteenth century) had something of a reputation as a centre for money changing and financial transactions, so that Philip III of Spain was somewhat unjust when he wrote of the temple in 1614, 'the treasure that goes in [here] never comes out again'.[106]

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has perhaps been too brief to encompass the totality of the trade overland and along the coasts of southern India; however, this at least in part reflects the paucity of documentation that is available on the subject, important though it is.

104 On Srirangam, see V.N. Hari Rao, *History of Srirangam Temple*, Tirupati, 1976, and *South Indian Inscriptions*, Volume XXIV (Inscriptions of the Ranganathasvami Temple, Srirangam), Madras, 1982, Inscriptions 511, 512, 514, 515, 516, 525, *passim*. On other temples, K.V. Raman, *Sri Varadarajaswami Temple, Kanchi: A study of its history, art and architecture*, New Delhi, 1975, K. Ismail, *Karnataka Temples: Their role in socio-economic life*, Delhi, 1984, and Peter A. Granda, 'Property rights and land control in Tamil Nadu: 1350–1600', Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1984, pp. 272–88.

105 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fl. 1123, and VOC. 1122, fl. 623. For an earlier reference, see Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda*, p. 75.

106 Letter from Philip of Spain to the viceroy at Goa, dated 21 February 1610, published in R.A. de Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documents Remettidos da Índia*, Volume I, Lisbon, 1880, p. 359.

It has been observed in the course of this chapter that the various forms of trade discussed – overland, fluvial, coastal and overseas – could complement as well as rival one another. In the case of the riverine trade, it was limited in character for the most part in southern India, and scarcely comparable in dimensions to the great Gangetic or Indus systems in the north. In the western coastal strip of southern India alone, the dominance of riverborne trade was total, and with the exception of the trans-mountain routes which connected the coastal strip to the area east of the western Ghats, trade was predominantly riverine. In the rest of the peninsula however, overland trade routes seldom encountered competition from riverborne traffic.

The complementarities between the coastal and overland trade on the one hand and overseas trade on the other were stressed at the outset of this chapter. The coastal and overland networks served as feeders and distributaries; in the absence of periodic *qafilas* from Hyderabad to Masulipatnam, the trade of the latter would have been greatly reduced. Still, on occasion, the overseas and overland networks could come into conflict. In the late sixteenth century, for example, when maritime links between the south-eastern coast and the western Indian Ocean were limited, overland links from Golconda and Masulipatnam to west coast outlets such as Goa, Dabhol and Surat assumed a certain significance. However, as we shall see in the next two chapters, with the growth of direct maritime trade, first from Masulipatnam to the Red Sea and later to Bandar Abbas, and finally, with the growth in the latter half of the seventeenth century of a regular maritime trade between Surat and the Persian Gulf on the one hand, and Madras and Masulipatnam on the other, the vigour of the overland trade was undoubtedly affected. In theory, some coastal trading links – that between Malabar and southern Coromandel, for example – were in competition with other overland trade routes, that from Kayamkulam to Tirunelveli or Calicut and Cannanore to Tanjavur. Again, the trade in Coromandel textiles carried by the coastal *qafila* to Goa was in theory rival to the overland trade from Goa to Golconda and Masulipatnam. In practice however, this seems to have scarcely been the case. It is of importance to note that the axes of the two trades were – in the main – not the same; whereas coastal trade was mainly conducted in the north-south direction, the major peninsular land routes were from east to west, thus ensuring for the greater part a complementarity between the two.

The terms in which the 'inland trade' has been treated in this chapter differ in most respects from the treatment by Raychaudhuri,

which we have referred to earlier. There, inland trade is treated as adjunct to the Command Economy of the state, and we are told that 'trade followed the flag very closely'. Indeed, the discussion of the inland trade there is almost wholly confined to the state's participation in, and influence on, the trade. It is perhaps a logical consequence that recent theories should attribute Mughal decline to changes in the inland trading and financial network. To a large extent, the attempt in this chapter has been to emphasise the other, relatively neglected, aspect of the overland and coastal trade, namely its autonomous character (relative to the state), and the initiative and place of participants who were not integrally of the Command Economy. To be sure, events such as the depopulation of Vijayanagara in the last third of the sixteenth century had a significant impact on the major trade routes, but it is important to note too that certain broad regional complementarities in specialisation with respect to agricultural and handicraft production provided a basic underpinning to the pattern of commodity movement. These movements were dependent on a rurban economy of small marts, coastal outlets, as well as inland *pettais*, *patnams* and *palaiyams*, some associated with petty military chiefs, others formed on the initiative of commercial groups.

There can be no doubt that a good proportion of total production – and in particular agricultural production – did not enter the market, and was reserved for self-consumption within peasant households. Another part of production, though alienated from the producing unit, was redistributed or exchanged outside the market, on account of tributary demands, as well as to cover 'customary' payments in a surrounding moral economy. Our stress in this chapter has been on the fact that, besides these aspects, there also existed a commercial economy, with respect to goods as well as services. Exchanges in this economy were not simply a matter of a drain from 'country' to 'towns', and of a subsequent exchange among urban poles. In this respect, the supposed contrast between the place of the rural market in India and China in the period – in the former, merely a convenience to facilitate 'the predominantly one-way flow of commodities from villages to towns', in the latter 'the focal points of peasant life'[107] – may be little more than a historiographical illusion.

[107] Raychaudhuri, 'Inland trade', p. 327.

3

Overseas trade, 1500–1570: Traders, ports and networks

Introduction

During the last two decades, our understanding of long-distance Indian Ocean commerce in the sixteenth century and the role of the Portuguese therein has come a long way from W.H. Moreland's notion that the Ocean was a Portuguese lake, in which 'the absence of any serious opposition made it possible to control the seas by means of fleets of very moderate strength'.[1] This idea went together, of course, with the idea of an 'Iberian century' in Indian history (or at least maritime history), broken only in the early seventeenth century with the arrival of the Dutch and the English Companies, who destroyed the stranglehold of the Portuguese over maritime commerce. Much of the debate, initiated by Moreland in the English-speaking world, and continued more recently in the works of M.N. Pearson and Niels Steensgaard, has tended to focus however on the western Indian Ocean, perhaps as a consequence of the concern with the relative importance of the Cape route and the overland route for the trade between Europe and Asia. It has been to a certain extent then, a debate with an implicitly Europocentric focus.[2] If there is a secondary area of focus where Indian Ocean studies in the sixteenth century are concerned, it is the Indonesian archipelago, and the continued consideration of the effects of the capture of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511, with the usual corollary being the study of the

[1] W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Indian Economic History*, London, 1923, pp. 6–8.

[2] See M.N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century*, Berkeley/London, 1975, pp. 96–118; Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies: The Structural Crisis in the European-Asian Trade in the Early 17th Century*, Copenhagen, 1973, pp. 81–113. Both these influential studies have been subjected to extensive critical scrutiny; see for example, Geneviève Bouchon, 'Pour une histoire du Gujarat du XVe au XVIIe siècle', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, IV, 1980, pp. 150–4, and M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz., 'The structures of trade in Asia in the 16th and 17th centuries', *Mare Luso-Indicuum*, IV, 1980, pp. 1–43. The neglect of the Bay of Bengal in studies of the 16th century is accurately reflected in synthetic works, cf. K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, pp. 63–79.

spice procurement in that region for the cargoes of Lisbon-bound Portuguese Indiamen.[3]

But, more recently, in one of the most interesting essays on the period in the historiography, Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz argues that in contrast to the Portuguese presence in the western Indian Ocean, 'beyond Ceylon – that is in the Bay of Bengal, in the seas of the archipelago and in the Far East – the Portuguese enterprise was closer to the Guinea model: first, fortresses became less frequent and even factories were placed at distant intervals, secondly, the dominant type of trade was a seasonal one along the coasts', going on to add, 'Our poor knowledge of the dimensions of this trade, and the influence of the chroniclers, who gave an excessively large importance to military aspects, has caused Portuguese historians to misunderstand [this]...'. He concludes: 'If one equates mercantile expansion to conquest, paying attention to only the centres "officially" under the control of the Portuguese Crown, one runs the risk of understanding neither the importance of this region in the economy of the Portuguese empire, nor the dimensions of the Portuguese influence on the local population'.[4]

This extended quotation has been necessary to highlight a peculiarity of the historiography on sixteenth century Asian trade, wherein some areas remain areas of darkness not simply because sources are not available on them, but because the historiography develops unevenly, and writing begets more writing. In contrast to Thomaz's essay cited above, the problem that this chapter seeks to address is not merely that of the place of overseas trade from southern India in the Portuguese Asian empire, or of the Portuguese influence on the commerce of the ports of the region; instead, the attempt is to understand the changes in the pattern of commerce carried on by diverse communities of traders, from the Coromandel, Malabar and Kanara coasts in the period from about 1500 to 1570, with the aid of the Portuguese sources. It is as part of this more general purpose that one seeks to understand the role played by the Portuguese official and unofficial elements in the sixteenth century.

[3] See M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz., *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago Between 1500 and About 1630*, The Hague 1962, as also several articles by Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz, in particular 'Maluco e Malaca', in A. Teixeira da Mota, ed., *A viagem de Fernão de Magalhães e a questão das Molucas*, Lisbon, 1975, and 'Les Portugais dans les mers de l'archipel au XVIe siècle', *Archipel* (18), 1979, pp. 105–25. Also I.A. Macgregor, 'Notes on the Portuguese in Malaya', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Volume XXVIII, Part 2, 1955, pp. 5–47.

[4] Thomaz, 'Les Portugais', p. 105.

Coromandel trade c. 1500

The coast of Coromandel is conventionally defined in one of two ways: one set of historians choose as the northern limit Point Godavari, and as the southern one Point Calimere, while another set modify the southern limit, extending what comprises the Coromandel coast as far as the island of Manar. Here, the latter definition is adhered to, and hence we have at the southern limit of Coromandel the beginnings of the Fishery Coast.

If we are to understand the commerce carried on from the coast in the early years of the sixteenth century, it is necessary to turn to three fairly detailed as well as well-thumbed contemporary accounts, those of Duarte Barbosa (Portuguese factor at Cochin in the 1510s), Tomé Pires (sometime *escrivão*, or scrivener, of the Melaka factory, and later envoy to China), and of the Bolognese traveller Ludovico di Varthema.[5] These accounts are admittedly somewhat patchy in their coverage, but enable us nonetheless to arrive at a picture of the trade in the early years of the sixteenth century against which developments later in the century could be compared.

We have already seen in the previous chapter that, in the early sixteenth century, the coastal trade in the region followed a pattern that connected Bengal and Orissa to Coromandel, and southern Coromandel to northern Sri Lanka (Jaffna) and southern Malabar.[6] Links between Coromandel and the ports of the Kanara coast were well-nigh unknown, nor indeed were there convoys of craft that linked the Konkan or Gujarat ports to those of Coromandel. The commodities carried on the coastal network were largely of agricultural origin: rice, grains, pulses, oil, butter, other essentially vegetable products such as timber, areca, cardamon, as well as a certain amount of manufactures. These manufactures (often textiles) served on the one hand to feed the 'high seas' network; on the other hand (when they did not) they were largely coarse textiles, such as those of the

[5] These accounts have been translated into English in the following editions: M.L. Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, 2 Volumes, London, The Hakluyt Society, 1918/21, see in particular Volume II; Armando Cortesão, ed., *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires and the Book of Francisco Rodrigues*, London, The Hakluyt Society, 1944, 2 Volumes, particularly Volume II, Part 1; and finally J.W. Jones, ed., *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, London, The Argonaut Press, 1928. For a general account of Asian trade at the turn of the sixteenth century, see Geneviève Bouchon, 'Les Mers de l'Inde à la fin du XVe siècle: Vue Générale', *Moyen Orient et Océan Indian*, Volume I, 1984, pp. 101–16.

[6] See in particular Varthema's account, *ibid.*, 74–6. I have used the original version, in Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, Volume I, ed. M. Milanesi, reprint Turin, 1978, pp. 844–7.

Madurai region, and those embarked in the ports of the Fishery Coast.

In contrast to this unspectacular but basic exchange implied by the coastal trade, the high-seas trade was largely concentrated in the early sixteenth century, and carried on from the port of Pulicat (Palaverkadu), located immediately to the south of the lake of the same name, and squarely in the middle of the Coromandel coast.[7] The origins of trade from this port are somewhat obscure, but it might be argued that its rise to importance in the fifteenth century was closely linked with the stabilisation of Vijayanagara control over the area, and the crystallisation of stable links between the port of Pulicat and the great imperial city of Vijayanagara, to the north-west. By the early sixteenth century, Pulicat's links extended essentially in two directions: on the one hand to Mergui and the ports of the Irrawaddy delta in southern Burma, and on the other to the nodal point and entrepôt of Melaka to the south-east. Of these two links, which are testified to in numerous accounts, in particular that of Ludovico di Varthema (the only one of the three early sixteenth century observers cited earlier actually to visit Pulicat), the latter link – with Melaka – is somewhat clearer than the former. The trade with Mergui (or Tenasserim as the region was generally known) was apparently of no more than minor importance.[8] Trade with Pegu and lower Burma, in particular the ports of Martaban, and Cosmin, appears to have been of greater significance, with the exports from the coast comprising largely of textiles, and the red yarn from the Krishna delta, much in demand in Pegu. It must be clarified here that there were three major and more or less distinct textile producing

[7] For a description of Pulicat in the early sixteenth century, see Varthema, *Itinerary*, ibid., pp. 77–8 (Italian edition, p. 847, "Di Paleachate, terra dell'India"); *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, n. 5, Volume II, pp. 129–32. A general synthetic account of Portuguese and other accounts of Pulicat in the period is to be found in Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Volume I, pp. 409–11.

[8] On this, see Varthema's and Barbosa's accounts, *ibid.*, as also the letters of Andrea Corsali, dated 6 January 1515 and 18 September 1517, in Ramusio, *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, Volume II, pp. 31–4, 71. There are also inscriptional and other indigenous references to Pulicat: cf (a) the inscription from Vedavallitayar temple, Nagalapuram (Chingleput), dated January 1521, concerning taxes on houses in Pulicat (*South-Indian Inscriptions*, Volume XVII, Madras, 1964, inscription 679, pp. 311–13), (b), *TTDI*, Volume IV, no. 75, pp. 144–5 (which records the grant to the temple of 3,200 *panam* by a certain Koneri, resident at Palaverkadu, on 1 October 1536), and Volume V, no. 154, pp. 406–8 (which records the grant to the temple of numerous taxes, including several relating to Pulicat, in July 1554), (c) *Government Oriental Manuscripts Library*, Madras, Mackenzie Manuscript no. 3082, *Palaverkadu Kaifiyat*. I thank M. Rajendran of Tamil University, Tanjavur, for this last reference.

areas in Coromandel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. First there was the northern belt, in the Krishna-Godavari region, of relatively minor importance in the early sixteenth century except as a subsidiary source for the cargoes of ships leaving Pulicat. Secondly, the central Coromandel strip, in which Pulicat itself was located, a major producer of textiles for the archipelago and Burmese markets, and thirdly, the more austral region extending from Kunjimedu to the southern extremity of the Kaveri delta.

The textiles from all these regions were collected and shipped from Pulicat, and there is evidence from the early sixteenth century of trade on the high seas network (albeit at low level) from only one or two other Coromandel ports: these include Kunjimedu, and Naguru in southern Coromandel. Further south, between Point Calimere and Cape Comorin, lay two other ports of some significance in the early sixteenth century – Kilakkarai and Kayal. Both these ports were in the period under the control of the Tiruvadi *rajas* of Venad, though dominated by Muslim Labbai and Marakkayar traders. Of the two, Kilakkarai seems to have been very largely a centre of the coastal trade in rice and coarse cloth to Sri Lanka and Malabar; Kayal, on the other hand, was a more substantial centre, whose importance in long-distance commerce can be traced at least to the fourteenth century. The particular importance of this port derived from its close connection with pearl fishing, and on account of which Duarte Barbosa testifies, it was 'inhabited by Moors and Heathen merchants of importance', who traded above all with Bengal and Malabar.[9] By the second quarter of the sixteenth century however, this port had almost disappeared from the commercial scene, apparently on account of silt accumulation, and a shift in the shore line along the Tamraparani delta. Thus, until the rise of Tuticorin in the early seventeenth century, no port of real significance existed in that section of the coast; there were however several minor ports from which short-distance coastal trade was carried on.

We have already noted that, while several of the long-distance trading links from south-eastern India in the early sixteenth century are obscure on account of the paucity of data, the trade to Melaka at least is fairly clear. Melaka was essentially a funnel; since the Coromandel ports in the period had no direct links with the eastern archipelago, the southern Malay peninsula ports and northern

[9] Cortesão, ed., *The Suma Oriental*, n. 5, Volume II, fl. 168 of the text. The port described there as Naor may be assumed to be Naguru. On Kayal, and Kilakkarai, see in particular, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume II, pp. 120–4.

Sumatra ports served as the locus where the flows – the eastward one of Coromandel textiles, and the westward one of Chinese wares, gold, copper and spices – met and intermingled in exchange. In the early years of the sixteenth century (and particularly in the period up to 1511), the major part of the exchange took place in Melaka, with an annual traffic of one great ship and several smaller ones (perhaps as many as five) from Coromandel – which is to say principally Pulicat – to Melaka. In addition, there was also a minor traffic to other ports located in what we have identified as the 'funnel' region, and this included in annual ship (mentioned by Tomé Pires) to Pidir in northern Sumatra, as well as shipping from Pasai to Coromandel, using which the survivors of the wreck of Albuquerque's ship *Flor de la Mar* arrived at Pulicat in 1512. Further, one cannot wholly rule out the possibility of the occasional ship from Coromandel putting in at Perak, Kedah, or other Malay Peninsula ports.[10]

The provenance of shipping on these routes – in particular that to Melaka – and the identity of its owners in the early years of the sixteenth century proves to be something of a puzzle. The mercantile community of Pulicat at the time was a mixed one, with a cosmopolitan character. Communities lived in separate and demarcated quarters in the port town in a manner typical of the period, and reminiscent of the well-known layout of such mercantile towns as pre-Portuguese Melaka. The major traders at Pulicat in the period were Muslims, a few of Arab origin, but largely members of the Muslim communities of coastal south-eastern India, known as Chulias in parts of south-east Asia, and Marakkayars on Coromandel. Besides, there were the Telugu-speaking Chetties of the Balija and Komatti communities, who were involved not merely in the overseas trade but also in inland procurement and distribution networks. A conspicuous third community were the Armenians, and it was through this community that the Portuguese seem to have gained familiarity with the port in the decade 1510 to 1520.[11] It would appear clear enough that at least a part of the shipping from Coromandel was owned by these locally based merchants. In addition to them, on the Melaka line, one can trace the involvement of at least two other elements: on the one hand, the Sultans of pre-Portuguese Melaka maintained a commercial interest and shipping on this route,[12] while

[10] See Meilink Roelofsz., *Asian Trade*, n. 3, p. 90.

[11] On the early Portuguese encounters with Pulicat, see for example João de Barros, *Da Asia*, Década Terceira, edição Livraria Sam Carlos, Lisbon, 1974, Parte 2, pp. 223–4; also see Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, n. 7.

[12] Letter from Afonso de Albuquerque to the King of Portugal, dated 1 April 1512, published in R.A. de Bulhão Pato and H. Lopes de Mendonça, eds., *Cartas de*

on the other, the *keling* merchants of Melaka – which is to say those who were loosely of Tamil and Telugu origin, and settled in the great entrepôt – appear to have had considerable involvement in the commerce. Evidence of this latter involvement may be gleaned both from Tomé Pires' account (even though he tends to use the term *keling* far too loosely, confusing merchants based in Melaka and those based in Coromandel). Equally significant is the great familiarity evidenced by the principal *keling* merchants of Melaka – such as Nina Chatu – with commerce on this route, when the Portuguese attempted to elicit such information from them.[13]

The value of cargoes on Pulicat's various lines of commerce cannot be accurately estimated for the early sixteenth century in the present state of information. The only line of commerce where the value of goods carried is at all estimable is that linking Pulicat to Melaka. It is usually suggested that the total value of textiles imported into Melaka from Pulicat in this period would have been of the order of 175,000 *cruzados*, which when broken up into its component parts comprised one large ship with a cargo worth from 80,000 to 100,000 *cruzados*, and five smaller ships with cargos in the region of 12,000 to 15,000 *cruzados* each.[14] J.J. Brennig has attempted to convert this monetary value into quantities of textiles, in order to effect a comparison with Coromandel's textile exports late in the seventeenth century. One is conscious however of the great difficulties inherent in making such a comparison, which stem from at least two quarters. First, one has to use a single 'average' price per yard to convert monetary units into yardage; secondly, and perhaps more important, the fact that Melaka represented only one of several ports with which Pulicat traded, even if it was arguably the most important of the partner ports. Thus, the exclusion of exports of Pasai and Pidir, the ports of lower Burma and Mergui renders the figures used by Brennig non-comparable with those from the late seventeenth century, where one is treating *all* exports from Coromandel.

In respect of Pegu, or lower Burma, the testimony of António Dinis, sometime Portuguese factor at Martaban, is of particular

Afonso de Albuquerque (henceforth *CAA*), 7 Volumes, Lisbon, 1884–1935, Volume I, pp. 45–6, which mentions a ship of the former Sultan on the Coromandel voyage.

13 On Nina Chatu, see *inter alia* Luís Filipe Thomaz, 'Nina Chatu e o Comércio Português em Malaca', *Memórias do Centro de Estudos de Marinha*, Volume V, 1976, pp. 3–27.

14 Meilink Roelofsz., *Asian Trade*, n. 3, pp. 66–7, 90, basing herself on Cortesao, ed., *Suma Oriental*, n. 5, Volume II, pp. 271–2. The higher estimate, that the cargo of the great ship was worth 100,000 *cruzados* is from a letter of Ruy de Brito Patalim, first Captain of Melaka, dated 6 January 1514, and addressed to the King of Portugal, in *CAA*, Volume III, p. 94.

significance. Dinis, in a letter of 1516, stresses the importance of trade between the port of Cosmin, in the western Irrawaddy delta, and Coromandel, which in his opinion averaged four of five ships a year. These ships carried textiles and yarn from Coromandel, and returned with a cargo of gold and rubies; this meant that Pulicat was, in the early sixteenth century, a major centre of the jewel trade. It is also possible that a trade existed between Martaban itself and Pulicat; certainly, one of the early Portuguese endeavours was to tap the trade in lac at this Burmese port, basing themselves in the ports of Coromandel.[15]

This methodological problem, of the neglect of certain important trade routes, render Brennig's quantitative comparison suspect, but – as we shall see ahead – do not necessarily vitiate his *broad* conclusion, which is that textile exports from Coromandel expanded substantially in the period from 1500 to 1680.[16]

Early Portuguese interaction, 1510–50

It is unclear when the first Portuguese made their way to Coromandel, though evidence does suggest that as early as 1506 some of them had landed, purely by accident, in the vicinity of Nagapattinam, where they received a hostile reception from local Muslim traders.[17] After this stray incident, contact on a regular basis had to wait almost a decade, after the capture in 1511 of Melaka by the Portuguese.

The overall strategy, or scheme of things, envisaged in the Portuguese capture of nodal points in the intra-Asian network of commerce has already been the subject of considerable discussion in the historiography. It is noticeable that all the points that they captured or attempted to capture in the first three decades of the sixteenth century lay on the 'major axis' of Indian Ocean commerce – a route that stretched from the eastern Archipelago and China, via Melaka and the Indian west coast to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. The

15 On the trade to Pegu and Cosmin, see the letter from António Dinis at Melaka to Tristão Silva and Francisco Pessoa, dated 15 August 1516, *ANTT*, Corpo Cronológico (henceforth CC), I/20/87, published in Luís Filipe Thomaz, *(De Malaca a Pegu: Viagens de um feitor português (1512–1515)*, Lisbon, 1966, pp. 187–92. Also the letters of Andrea Corsali, cited above, note 8.

16 See Joseph Brennig, 'The textile trade of seventeenth century Northern Coromandel' pp. 50–1.

17 Letter from Gaspar da India to the King of Portugal dated 16 November 1506, in *CAA*, II, p. 378. The Portuguese involved in the incident were Francisco Pereira, Estêvão de Vilhena, and a son of Gaspar da Índia, who had been sent from Malabar to investigate prospects at Melaka.

capture of Melaka, the importance of which was beyond doubt where control of the major axis was concerned, had an interesting side effect. It put the Portuguese in contact with a stream of traffic that was, in their vision, really peripheral; this was the traffic from Bengal, Coromandel and Pegu to Melaka. In the early phase of expansion within Asia, when the Portuguese administration had no clear conception of the extent or of the limitations of the resources available to it, or indeed of the strengths of pre-existent commercial structures, sorties were made from Melaka to each one of these areas. The decade 1510 to 1520 was arguably the most interesting period for exploration of this sort on account of the 'official' agencies associated with the Portuguese Crown. The exploration of links and commercial lines radiating outwards from Melaka was, however, predicated on the cooperation of mercantile groups resident in Melaka, and the use of their expertise. The principal group which was used to this end by the Portuguese state were the *kelings*, already a powerful community in pre-Portuguese Melaka, and able to shore up their position with the decline of the other major community, the Gujarati traders resident there. In the decade 1510–20 then, we have the *Fazenda Real* (or Royal Treasury) of Portugal entering into exploratory commercial enterprises, which took the form of single-venture partnerships with Melaka's merchants. The documents of one such enterprise, involving a voyage from Melaka to the ports of lower Burma, and based on a partnership between the Crown and Nina Chatu (*keling* merchant at Melaka) have been published *in extenso*, and provide clear evidence of the self-image that the Crown's representatives had in the period – of the Crown as a merchant among merchants.[18] The initial Pegu expedition was carried out on the Portuguese Crown ship *São João*, which left Melaka for Martaban in August 1512, returning in May 1513. The ship's cargo space was divided equally between the Crown and Nina Chatu, each sending a factor on board to administer their share of the

[18] The cooperative venture between the Portuguese Crown and Nina Chatu to Pegu is discussed in great detail in Luís Filipe Thomaz, *De Malaca a Pegu*. Despite several misprints, and inadequate annotation, this edition is nonetheless of immense importance. A critique may be found in G. Bouchon, 'Une route maritime du Golfe du Bengale au debut du XVIe siècle', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, II, 1976, pp. 194–8. The development of official Portuguese relations with Pegu is further discussed in Luís Filipe Thomaz, *A Viagem de António Correa a Pegu em 1519*, Lisbon, 1976, and by Geneviève Bouchon, 'Les prémiers voyages Portugais à Passai et à Pegou (1512–1520)', *Archipel* (18), 1979, pp. 127–56. The set of documents on which these studies largely base themselves are part of a series, *ANTT*, Núcleo Antigo, Nos. 801 to 807.

cargo. Further, all expenses – whether on repairs, maintenance, food for the mariners, or loading and unloading charges – were divided equally between the two parties.

The *São João* returned to Melaka, then, in May 1513, bringing with it another ship that had been constructed at Martaban, freshly purchased on account of the Melaka factory. This latter vessel was sent to China in early 1514, and at about the same time plans were set in motion to send the idle *São João* to Pulicat, in a joint venture with the ubiquitous Nina Chatu.[19] From the occasional references in the documents of the period, we gather that, as in the Pegu voyage, cargo space was divided in two halves, the Crown half being laden with alum and copper, worth between 12,000 and 13,000 *cruzados*. Further, the administration of the trade remained as on the earlier trip to Pegu; the Crown sent three persons, a factor Simão do Pino, his scrivener Heitor de Valadares, and a third Portuguese João. Álvares de Caminha, to administer its share of the cargo, while Nina Chatu sent his own factors on board. The ship carried on the voyage 'many merchants and honoured persons' from amongst Melaka's residents, the *nakhuda* himself being an 'honoured Moor' (a *keling* convert to Islam). Its arrival and subsequent purchases of textiles at Pulicat are reported by Albuquerque in a letter to D. Manuel late in 1514. Of particular interest is the fact that besides the individual merchants who travelled on board with their goods, there were also cases of Portuguese resident at Melaka who participated in the venture, handing over money *in commenda*. For instance, Pero Barbalho, the *provedor de defuntos* at Melaka, handed over to Simão do Pino some 12,000 *calaims* (or 360 *cruzados*) in cash, to be employed in Pulicat goods; this money belonged to the estate of Pero Pessoa, deceased factor at Melaka. Again, one Afonso Galego handed over 200 *cruzados* to two 'chatys' on board the ship, on the understanding that they would give him 300 on their return, at 50 per cent on the principal sum.

[19] Regarding the joint venture to Pulicat in 1514, the discussion is based on the following documentation that is available to us:
(a) Letter from Ruy de Brito Patalim, captain of Melaka, to the King of Portugal, *ANTT*, CC, I/14/49, dated 6 January 1514, published in *CAA*, III, pp. 95.
(b) Ruy de Brito Patalim to Afonso de Albuquerque, 6 January 1514, *ANTT*, CC, I/14/52, in *CAA*, III, pp. 222–3.
(c) Officials at Melaka to the King, 7 January 1514, *ANTT*, CC, I/14/51, in *CAA*, III, pp. 90–1.
(d) Conhecimento de Duarte Coelho, provedor de defuntos de Malaca, 4 July 1514, *ANTT*, CC, II/49/24, in *CAA*, VII, pp. 126–8.
(e) Albuquerque at Goa to the King, 8 November 1514, *ANTT*, CC, 1/6/106, in *CAA*, I, p. 339.

Thus, once again, the documents indicate quite clearly that, as in the case of Pegu, the Crown participated as a merchant among merchants; roughly contemporaneous documentation shows us the anxiety of Melaka's new rulers to preserve and augment existent traffic with Pulicat, manifest for example in the initial customs concessions made to ships arriving from Coromandel, as well as in other compromises arrived at with *kelings* who traded on the route.[20] At the same time, the custom of sending a ship on account of the Portuguese Crown–at first irregularly, and later as an annual affair–crystallised by the late 1520s into an organised system, both in respect of Pulicat and Pegu. The development of the two *carreiras* (or navigational lines) followed roughly parallel patterns: thus, the *carreira do Choromandel* moved from an initial Melaka–Pulicat–Melaka route to a Goa–Pulicat–Melaka–Goa route, whereas that of Pegu changed from an initial Melaka–Pegu–Melaka route (with Pegu meaning Martaban in most cases), to a Goa–Pulicat–Pegu–Goa pattern.[21]

In the same decade, 1510–20, private Portuguese independently made contact with Coromandel, as also with other ports on the Bay of Bengal's littoral. The rewards of service for the Crown were not sufficient to keep the common Portuguese soldier or even the relatively better-remunerated lower nobility content, especially when there was money to be made from independent trade. Rewards of the 'official' sort–which is to say positions in the administration, which were lucrative–were distributed highly iniquitously, and specific families dominated the distribution of patronage within the *Estado da Índia*, often for years at a stretch. This naturally led to discontent, and the consequence of this fairly widespread feeling was the desertion of garrisons for the more lucrative life of the private trader. The Melaka garrison already during the decade 1511–20 was plagued with a constant problem of undermanning, a problem that was to continue until the end of the century. In the early period, the deserters appear largely to have found their way to Pulicat, and to the ports of Bengal, principally Satgaon and Chittagong. Some of them went to great lengths to nativise themselves, such as for example the

[20] Ruy de Brito to the King, *ANTT*, CC, I/14/52, in *CAA*, III, pp. 222–3.

[21] The documents of the crucial period of transition are not available to us. However, these changes may be inferred from the documents preserved in *ANTT*, Chancelarias Reais. See for example the grant of the captaincy of the Pegu voyage to Diogo Pacheco (Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 5, fl. 34, dated 1544) which may be compared to the grant in J.H. da Cunha Rivara, ed., *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental* (henceforth *APO*), 6 Fascicules, Goa, 1857–76, Fascículo V, Document 926, pp. 1163–4. Also see note 49 below.

'Portuguese Moors' encountered by a dismayed embassy from Goa to Gaur (in Bengal) in 1521.[22] Others rested content with residing in a port, conglomerating to form one of several resident foreign communities, with their own communal structure and leadership. In the case of Coromandel, it was only logical that they chose to settle in the existing cosmopolitan centre at Pulicat, where an official report from 1520 estimated their number at between 200 and 300.[23] Curiously enough, the unofficial head of this little community was not a Portuguese but a Florentine–Piero Strozzi–who was one of several Italians who attached themselves early on to the Portuguese Asian enterprise. Initially, Strozzi had concerned himself with the jewel-trade from Pulicat, but, in 1519, was sent by the Portuguese Governor Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, to investigate the trade in Burmese lac on Coromandel. Strozzi had his own ideas though, and seems to have settled down at Pulicat, coming to command a tiny, unofficial, 'empire within an empire'. The Portuguese reporter of 1520 cited earlier states (not without a trace of envy), 'In Choromandel, since two years ago, is one Pero Estroço, a man from outside the land, who does what he likes there, and is extremely rich'.[24]

The Portuguese community at Pulicat had its teething problems, and, faced with hostility from Goa (represented for instance by the fact that they had to pay *higher* customs duties at Melaka than either Hindu or Muslim traders), it is not surprising that some of them, such as the celebrated João Moreno, mixed commerce and piracy as occupations. This should however not lead one to overstate the purely parasitical character of the Portuguese presence in the Bay of Bengal; on the contrary, it was in this phase that their activities may be termed relatively 'purely' mercantile.[25]

[22] I am grateful to Luís Filipe Thomaz for this reference from *ANTT*, Colecção São Vicente, Volume XI, fls. 47–88. This is to be published in the near future by L.F. Thomaz and Geneviève Bouchon, *Voyage dans les Deltas du Gange et de l'Irraouaddy: Relation Portugaise Anonyme (1521)*, Centre Cultural Português, Paris, 1988.

[23] *ANTT*, CC, I/9/92, published in *CAA*, VII, p. 182. An estimate of the Portuguese resident on Coromandel in 1527 is available in *ANTT*, CC, III/9/94, and a later one from the 1540s in a letter from Miguel Ferreira to D. João de Castro dated 17 June 1546, published in Elaine Sanceau, ed., *Colecçao de São Lourenço* (henceforth *CSL*), 3 Volumes, Lisbon, 1973–83, Volume III, pp. 64–5.

[24] On Piero Strozzi, see my study, '"Um bom homem de tratar": Piero Strozzi, a Florentine in Portuguese Asia, 1510–1522', *Journal of European Economic History*, Volume XVI (3), 1987, and sources cited therein.

[25] One may contrast the character of the early impact, with the Portuguese Crown as trader, with later periods, where the Crown acted as monopolist and rentier. In this sense, the early phase of activity may be termed more 'purely' mercantile. On João Moreno, see Subrahmanyam, '"Um bom homem de tratar"'.

The disapproval felt in official circles in Goa for these settlers was soon given another twist, however. From the early years of their presence in Asia, the Portuguese had sought the last resting place of the Apostle St. Thomas, which was believed to be located in southern India.[26] This search culminated in 1518 with the discovery of a tomb in Mylapur, just south of Pulicat, which local legend held was that of the apostle. To gauge the importance of this discovery to contemporary Portuguese residents in Asia, one only has to read the account by any one of the three major chroniclers of the era–Barros, Correia and Castanheda.[27] The discovery had an important side effect; it enabled Goa to rationalise the extension of its administrative network to extend loosely over Coromandel as well. Thus, in the early 1520s–probably in 1521–we observe the appointment of one Manuel de Frias, whose patron was the then Governor of Portuguese India, Dom Duarte de Meneses, as the first Portuguese Captain of the Coromandel and Fishery Coasts.[28] This captain was resident at Pulicat, and held the post for a period of three years, in the pattern adopted in most of the overseas network set up by the Portuguese Crown. He was to have jurisdiction over all Portuguese resident on the coast, and further, with the aid of a small fleet maintained–at least initially–at the expense of the Crown, was to enforce the issuing of *cartazes* (or passes for navigation) to shipping that operated on and around Coromandel. The revenue that was generated by issuing these *cartazes* probably went to the captain as a perquisite, and was in addition to the salary paid him by the Crown. A clear picture of this aspect of the Captain's activities emerges from a long document dated 1526, which in large measure relates to the affair of a ship captured by the then captain of Coromandel, Manuel da Gama, off the port of Kayal.[29] The ship, which was attempting to sail from

[26] See for example the instructions given by the King of Portugal to D. Vasco da Gama and the commanders of other early fleets. An example is to be found in W.B. Greenlee, ed., *The Voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral to Brazil and India*, London, 1938, p. 48, *Passim*.

[27] See for instance Barros, *Da Ásia*, Década Terceira, Parte 2, pp. 222–3; Gaspar Correia, *Lendas da Índia* (ed. M. Lopes de Almeida), reprint Porto, 1975, Volume II, pp. 722–6; Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, *História do descobrimento e conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, reprint Porto, 1979, Volume I, Chapter 61, pp. 208–9.

[28] Correia, *Lendas*, Volume II, Parte II, Chapter IX, p. 721.

[29] *ANTT*, Núcleo Antigo, No. 808, 'Livro da Receita e Despesa de Manuel da Gama, Feitor e Capitam da Costa do Coromandel, Anno de 1526', a volume which deals in large measure with the capture of this ship, and with other minor details on the purchase of provisions for the fleet of the captain, Manuel da Gama. For further details, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Notes on the sixteenth century Bengal trade', *IESHR*, Volume XXIV (3), 1987.

Satgaon in Bengal to either Ceylon or Malabar, did not carry a *cartaz*, and as a consequence its entire cargo–largely pulses, rice and other provisions, with a small portion being Bengal textiles–was confiscated, and the Muslim *nakhuda* and his family (who were on board) sold into slavery. It is clear enough though that the purpose of *cartaz* issual in the period was two fold: to guarantee to the Captain a small revenue, and to ensure that no contraband goods (particularly pepper) was carried. It was as a norm not used in this early period to redirect commercial traffic in the Bay.[30]

The post of Captain of Coromandel had by the late 1520s been extended to include a whole host of other operations. The same person was usually appointed captain and also factor of the coast, with power extending as well over the Fishery Coast.[31] Crucially, the same person was also termed 'purveyor of the estates of the deceased' (*provedor dos defuntos*) and 'administrator of the Portuguese people on the coast' by Goa, with the former title implying that he had control over the estates of the Portuguese who died on the coast as well as those temporarily absent from it. In the case of the deceased, he was charged with ensuring that the estate was divided among the heirs, or despatched to them in Europe, and in return for this service was entitled to a share of the estate. Financially, this charge gave a great deal of power to its holder, for besides this legitimate return, possibilities of embezzlement were considerable. Thus, one may

30 This is apparent from a letter written by the settlers at São Tomé to the King of Portugal, *ANTT*, I/59/58, in *DPP*, II, p. 250, as also from another letter in *DPP*, III, pp. 166–7. In general, evidence is overwhelmingly in support of the continuance of Asian commerce and shipping in the Bay of Bengal in the period. This is evident from (i) a letter of Pero Barriga at Melaka to the Portuguese King, dated 3 August 1527, *ANTT*, CC, III/9/94, which talks of 'naos de Choramãodell [bringing] Roupas mujtas he mujtos mantymentos', (ii) a letter from Pero de Faria at Goa to the Portuguese King, *ANTT*, CC, I/60/17, 18 November 1537, mentioning duas tres naos que cadano de paleacate vẽ a malaqua com Roupas e mãtimentos', and from the document cited in note 39 below. An exceptional instance, that of a private Portuguese, Gabriel de Taíde, forbidden in 1547 to make a commercial voyage from São Tomé to Pegu, is recorded in his letter to D. João de Castro, dated 20 August 1547, in *CSL*, III, pp. 79–82. In the late 1530s, when D. Estêvão da Gama was Captain of Melaka, it would appear that he briefly attempted to obstruct (and perhaps to monopolise) traffic from Coromandel; on this, see two letters from Pero de Faria at Melaka to the Portuguese King, dated 22 and 23 November 1540, respectively *ANTT*, CC, I/68/86, and I/68/88.

31 See *ANTT*, Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 21, fl. 159; Livro 25, fl. 39, which refer to the appointment of Cosme de Paiva as factor of Coromandel and the Fishery Coast. Later the Fishery Coast came to be under the jurisdiction of the captain of Manar. For a general discussion of the Fishery Coast in the period, see C.R. De Silva, 'The Portuguese and pearl fishing off south India and Sri Lanka', *South Asia* (New Series), Volume I (1), 1978, p. 14–28.

imagine that it gave the captain at least as large a return as his other charge–'to give *cartazes* to the Moors and other who navigate.'[32]

From the 1530s on, a gradual change is manifest in the nature of Portuguese settlement on the coast. From an initial tendency to agglomerate and take advantage of the bustling port city of Pulicat, two nuclei of Portuguese settlement become apparent: the one a complex in central Coromandel, with Pulicat and its satellite São Tomé de Meliapor, and the other to the south, in the Kaveri delta port of Nagapattinam.[33] Initially, the Portuguese settled in Nagapattinam, were engaged in two sets of activities; on the one hand, they participated in the busy coastal commerce in rice to Jaffna and southern Malabar, bringing back areca, timber, cinnamon and pepper, on the other hand, the coastal trade in textiles to Pulicat played a part in their activities. It would seem in essence that these Portuguese operated side by side with the other principal commercial group in Nagapattinam, the Marakkayars, both typically functioning with small profit margins and small individual consignments in the trade. Even at this early stage of their settlement in the area, the Portuguese were, however, careful to separate their section of the settlement in this port from that of the 'natives of the land', even though the houses of the Portuguese continued to be roughly constructed, and did not involve the use of lime and mortar until the 1590s. By the early 1530s then, one encounters some forty-odd households of Portuguese in Nagapattinam, and at around the same time, there were a roughly equal number at São Tomé, the rest of the Coromandel Portuguese continuing to reside at Pulicat.[34]

The effects of the discovery of the tomb of St. Thomas at Mailapur have already been briefly discussed from the viewpoint of its implications for the administrative relations between Goa and the coast. Equally, the discovery had an impact of some significance on

[32] See *ANTT*, Chancelarias Reais, for the following references (besides that of Cosme de Paiva above): Diogo Rebelo–Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 9, fl. 17; Galaz Viegas–Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 19, fl. 59v.; João de Figueiredo–Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 50, fl. 9; João Freire–Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 69, fl. 87.

[33] On the growth of São Tomé, see the correspondence between its settlers and the King of Portugal, for instance *ANTT*, CC, I/59/58, published in *DPP*, II, pp. 249–55, as also *ANTT*, Gavetas, XI, 8–18, published in A. da Silva Rego, ed., *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, 12 Volumes, Lisbon, 1960–77, Volume II, pp. 712–15. On Nagapattinam, see note 34 below.

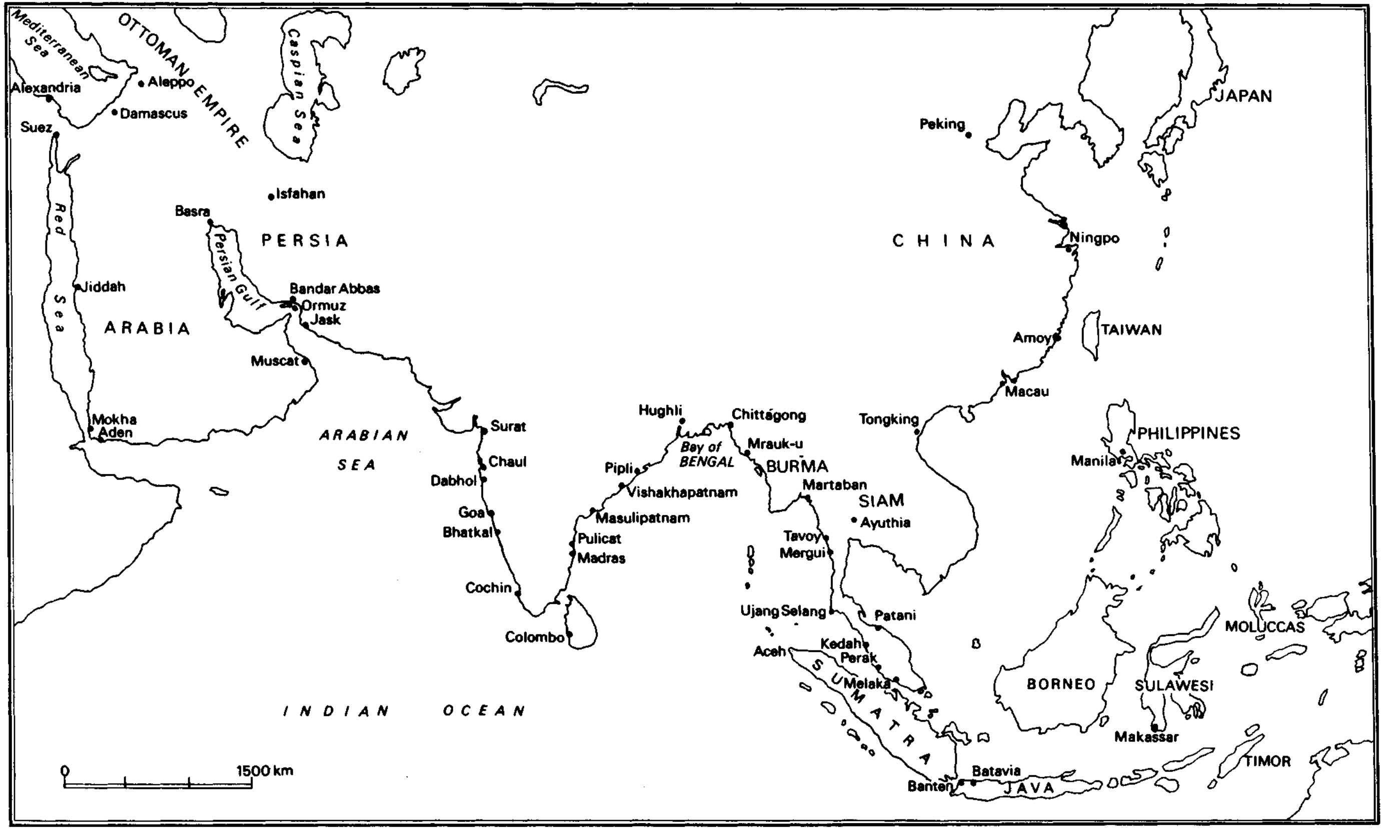
[34] João de Barrow, *Da Ásia*, Década IV, Parte I, Chapter XXV, pp. 517–19; this is a description of the port on the occasion of a raid there by Kunjali Marikkar in 1533, and also depicts relations between the settlers and the *adhikari*, representative of the Nayaka of Tanjavur.

the nature of private Portuguese settlement; this was manifested in part in the increasing tendency for 'respectable' Portuguese to settle there 'at the feet of the Sainted Apostle' (as the contemporary phrase had it) after having served the Crown for some years in Asia. These settlers – in marked contrast to the earlier breed of Portuguese at Pulicat – were able to seek for themselves a sort of special status, legitimising what had earlier been regarded as at bottom a disloyal act: that of putting personal gain and private commerce over the service of the Crown.[35] Characteristic of this new type of Portuguese settler on the coast in the 1520s, and 1530s, who supplemented rather than replaced the older archetypes – the deserter, the criminal and the disadvantaged – was Miguel Ferreira, who had been Albuquerque's ambassador to the Persian court. Ferreira is to be found at São Tomé in the 1530s and 1540s, settled there and with *mestiço* sons from a common-law marriage, trading and maintaining a fleet of ships as well as holding the post of captain of the coast on more than one occasion. Ferreira's is a particularly interesting case, since he clearly was a patron of some importance for the more impoverished Portuguese settled on the coast, and mounted quasi-independent expeditions to Sri Lanka using the manpower he thus recruited.[36] But Ferreira, like other settlers who had houses of their own at São Tomé, did not delink himself from Pulicat. Given that São Tomé, situated on a beachfront, with no river or shelter for ships, was one of the worst anchorages in Coromandel, what emerged was a São Tomé-Pulicat complex, with the settlers in the former largely trading via the latter.[37]

[35] This was summed up aptly in the phrase 'a merchant more is a soldier less', and complaints regarding the unsafe position of various Portuguese garrisons in Asia on account of these desertions continued in the 1540s. See for example the letter from Simão de Melo to the King dated 15 November 1545, *ANTT*, CC, I/77/10.

[36] On Miguel Ferreira, see Diogo do Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década V, Livro 5, pp. 476–7, in the same edition as Barros, n. 12. There are numerous documents from the 1530s and 1540s relating to Ferreira; see for example Ferreira's letter to the King of Portugal dated 26 November 1539, *ANTT*, CC, I/66/41, a grant registered in *ANTT*, Chancelarias Reais, D. João III, Livro 70, fl. 15 of an island off Sri Lanka to him. Finally see Elaine Sanceau, ed., *Colecção de São Lourenço*, Volumes II and III, Lisbon 1975–83, for the voluminous correspondence between Ferreira and D. João de Castro.

[37] Cf. *Viaggi alle Indie Orientali di C. Federici e G. Balbi*, ed. Olga Pinto, Rome, 1962, pp. 30–2, 161–7. Also see the English translation in Richard Hakluyt, ed., *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Volume III, reprint London, 1926, pp. 229–30.



Map 5 The Indian Ocean commercial network, 1500–1650

The 'Second Wind' and the decline of Pulicat

We have argued in the preceding sections that in the period up to 1550, the Portuguese – whether one refers to the Crown or to private Portuguese – fitted themselves without much difficulty or friction into a pre-existent commercial system. The issuing of *cartazes* by the Portuguese captain of the coast represented no more than a minor tax, rather than being restrictive or inhibitive where commercial traffic was concerned. Even in the trade in pepper, officially claimed by the Portuguese Crown as a monopoly, there is evidence that the captains of the coast routinely turned a blind eye to commerce in the commodity within the Bay of Bengal and from Coromandel itself.[38] The commerce of both the Muslim and Hindu traders whether with Melaka or with other destinations continued up to mid century undisturbed. The Portuguese factors at Melaka in the 1550s declared that some five to six ships arrived there annually from Coromandel, and it is clear enough that these belonged as much to Asian merchants as to private Portuguese.[39]

The Portuguese Crown's interest in this trade has already been mentioned, in the form of the annual despatch of a *nau* (or great ship) from Goa to Coromandel, whence it proceeded to Melaka and finally returned to Goa. We are fortunate enough to have, *circa* 1550, a detailed account of the commerce carried on by means of this *nau.*[40] It would appear, curiously enough, that on the Pulicat-Melaka run, the Crown invested no capital at all in the cargo. Instead, the business was run purely as a freight-trade, with the entire cargo space being freighted by merchants: 'Christãos, Gentios e Mouros'. The individual merchant who freighted space on the ship was obliged to pay 12 per cent of the value of his goods – one half as freight charges, and the other as customs duty in Melaka. Of the four hundred *bahars* of cargo space, the person appointed as captain of the ship (and the Royal Chanceries preserve a good number of such appointment letters, as well as those of the scriveners of such *naus*) was given as a

[38] Letter from the settlers at São Tomé to the King of Portugal, *ANTT*, CC, I/59/58, in *DPP*, II, p. 250.

[39] *ANTT*, Cartas dos Vice Reis, No. 131, anonymous and undated letter, probably from the 1550s, transcribed in Luís Filipe Thomaz, 'Os Portugueses em Malaca, 1511–1580', unpublished baccalaureate thesis, Faculty of Letters, University of Lisbon, 1964, Volume II, Document 271, pp. 167–8. Also see the references in note 30 *supra*, several of which are to be found transcribed in the same thesis.

[40] This is the second chapter of the "Livro que trata das Coisas da Índia e do Japão", a collection by diverse authors from about 1548, preserved in the *Biblioteca Municipal de Elvas*, Cota 5/381, published by Adelino de Almeida Calado in the *Boletim da Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra*, Volume XXIV, 1960, pp. 1–138.

Table 3.1 *'Typical' bill of lading of the 'nau del-Rei', c. 1550*

Textile	Bales	Value (in pardaus)
I. *Crown share of cargo space*		
1. Malay and Java cloth	120	24,000
2. Painted cloth, *tapis*, *sarassas* and *muris*	70	18,480
3. *Muris* from São Tomé	80	11,360
4. *Muris* from Nagapattinam	80	8,000
5. *Muris* from Kunjimedu	50	9,000
6. *Pintados* from Nagapattinam }		2,000
7. *Pintados* from Kunjimedu }	50	4,000
8. White cloth from Masulipatnam, } Caliture and Armagon, also *pintados*		8,000
II. *Captain's share of cargo space*		
9. *Pintados*	70	18,480
10. Java cloth	80	19,200
TOTAL VALUE		122,520

Note: *122,520 pardaus de fanoēs = 136,074* xerafins
Source: See note 40.

perquisite one-fourth, free of customs duty at Melaka as well, which was his to dispose of as he saw fit. The captain too normally rented his share of the cargo space to private merchants, the only difference being that he retained the entire 12 per cent he collected as a perquisite, paying nothing at the Melaka customs house.

According to the anonymously authored document on which this account is based, the cargo space of 400 *bahars* permitted the storage of roughly 600 bales of cloth, which were normally distributed as shown in Table 3.1.[41]

The administration of this Crown trade had by mid century become a source of some worry to the Portuguese administration at Goa, and

[41] The document cited in note 40, *supra*, is extremely difficult to read unambiguously, being shot through with errors of addition and opaque turns of phrase. I have assumed that the last three categories of textiles listed in the Crown share of cargo space amounted to 50 bales, a deduction rendered plausible by their value. The author also offers us an alternative construct, in which the Captain's share of cargo space is occupied by 50 bales *pintados*, 50 bales *muris* and 50 bales Java cloth, worth 28,760 *pardaus* in all. This would give a total cargo value of 113,600 *pardaus*, or 126,164 *xerafins*. The *pardau* mentioned here is the coin current in Pulicat, referred to in the document as *pardau de fanões*. The anonymous author suggests its value is 1.1106 xerafins, different from that stated in standard compendia such as António Nunez's 'Livro', where its value is declared to be *less* than a *xerafim*. I have however adhered to the conversion stated in the document. Finally, one can estimate the size of the *nau del-Rei* at around 350 to 400 tons, on the basis of its carrying capacity, stated to be some 600 *bahars* of spices (each bahar being roughly 210 kg.).

this was the context in which the anonymous document cited above was authored. There was to begin with the problem of profitability, as the captains of the ship tended to redistribute the cargo in such a way that the most profitable cloth (value for volume) fell to their share of cargo space. It was a common enough complaint, though clearly an exaggerated one, that with his fourth share in the cargo hold, the captain engrossed a half of freight charges. As for the possibility that the Crown would directly participate in the trade by sinking capital into the cargo, at least one official of the *Estado* noted that with five or more other ships coming in to Melaka from Coromandel each year, the profits would not be encouraging.[42] The loss in 1546 of the ship *Taforeia* on the Pulicat to Melaka leg of the voyage could only have contributed to the negative sentiments regarding direct Crown participation. The upshot of some rethinking that went on in the *Estado's* upper administrative echelons at the close of the 1540s and in the early 1550s was to move in the direction of two changes: first, to withdraw Crown shipping from such lines, and secondly (and this may appear strange in view of the first) to monopolise the Coromandel-Melaka line, preventing navigation by independent Asian shippers on it. The system which emerged was then a combination of these elements, and was what we term the 'concession system'.[43]

[42] See the references in notes 30 and 39 above. Also *ANTT*, CC, I/77/26, 'Parecer de Jorge Cabral sobre o comércio da pimenta e sobre o arrendamento das viagens de Coromandel, Pegu etc', dated 12 November 1545, transcribed in Thomaz, 'Os Portugueses em Malaca', II, pp. 367–70, Document 148. In this particularly important document, Cabral reacts to a suggestion, apparently put forward in the 1540s, that the right to navigate on the *carreira do Choromandel* and other routes be auctioned to private persons. He argues against this suggestion on two grounds: first, that this act would deprive the Crown of an important benefice that was given as a reward for service, and hence mean that Portuguese individuals in Asia would have little reason left to perform such service; secondly, that those who purchased these voyages in auction would prevent the navigation of others on the same routes, 'and if one were to forbid, with some decree, the despatch of the ships of the merchants of the land to the said parts [i.e. Pegu, Bengal and Melaka], it would be an occasion for all the land [i.e. Coromandel] to rise against us, and the trade of all that coast, and Pegu and Banda would be lost'.

[43] From the 1540s on, and particularly in the governorship of D. João de Castro, there was a considerable debate in the upper echelons of the *Estado da Índia*'s administration on what should be done to revitalise what was perceived to be an increasingly unprofitable system. There were some, like the belligerent Martim Afonso de Sousa, Castro's predecessor, who mooted the idea of raids on temples and local treasures. For an instance, the abortive attempt to raid the Kanchipuram temple, see Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo IV, pp. 300–4, *passim*. Still others proposed a more vigorous direct participation by the Crown in intra-Asian trade, and in the sale of pepper in the Bay of Bengal etc. On these proposals, there are several memoranda in addition to that of Cabral cited above. See for example that of Julião

In his closely argued article cited at the outset of this chapter, Luís Filipe Thomaz has posited the existence of a second wind where the Portuguese impact on Asian trade was concerned.[44] The popular image in the historiography is exemplified by Braudel, who informs us that, after a brief initial disruption caused by the Portuguese in the decade 1510–20, the pre-existent Asian trade re-emerged unscathed, 'like fair weather after a storm'.[45] However, as we shall see, both in the western Indian Ocean (which we shall be concerned to examine below), and in the Bay of Bengal the real impact of Portuguese official policy on maritime commerce was felt only in the latter half of the sixteenth century, as a consequence of the 'second wind'. Thomaz argues that it is demonstrably false to treat Portuguese official policy with respect to their own participation in Asian trade as a unity during the sixteenth century. Rather, he shows that there were significant differences between policies followed in the course of the century, and that, far from being random, these changes evolved in a particular direction. Of these changes, the system of concessions was perhaps the most significant. The changes appear to have arisen out of a complex of causative phenomena, including the Counter-Reformation (and the consequent growth of sentiment against non-Christians), the 'Atlantic turning', by which Portuguese official attention and capital was increasingly directed at the Atlantic trade and Brazil rather than their commercial enterprise in Asia, and the successive financial crises of the *Estado da Índia* itself.[46] To this one could add another cause, which was the growing need to institute a broader-based system of rewards for services, in response to the growing clamour of a constantly increasing number of 'old India hands'. The system of concessions, that begins to be visible from the late 1550s and which reaches its full flower around 1570, was thus a partial response to all these imperatives. It comprised the following:

Fernandes *ANTT*, CC, I/76/8, dated 19 January 1545. The concession system, of which the very first instances are available as early as in D. João de Castro's governorship, was apparently the result of this rethinking. For a general discussion of the period, also see J.-B. Aquarone, *D. João de Castro: Gouverneur et Vice-roi des Indes Orientales (1500–1548)*, 2 Volumes, Paris, 1968.

44 Luís Filipe Thomaz, 'Les Portugais', n. 3, pp. 108–09. This is the clearest exposition to date of the concession system, albeit almost exclusively from the Portuguese point of view, in the sense that its impact on Asian commerce is not considered. A summary of the system's functioning is also available in Artur Teodoro de Matos, *O Estado da Índia nos Anos de 1581–1588: Estrutura Administrativa e Económica*, Alguns Elementos para o seu estudo, Ponta Delgada, 1982, pp. 32–8.

45 Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, translated Siân Reynolds, London, 1982, p. 219.

46 Luís Filipe Thomaz, 'Les Portugais', p. 108.

in return for services rendered to the Crown, in lieu of a salary payment or to enable a *fidalgo* to arrange the marriage of his daughter, persons were granted the concession or right by the Crown of Portugal to make a voyage between two points in the Indian Ocean in their own shipping. The system was, in operation, a complex one, and we must separate its strands with care in order not to over simplify.

In part, these concessions replaced old Crown shipping routes (*carreiras*); thus, for example, the voyage to Pegu made by Crown shipping was replaced by a concession permitting a private person to make the voyage on his own ship. But, in other instances, routes which had earlier not been plied at all by Crown shipping were absorbed within the ambit of the concession system, such as for example the voyages to Orissa and the port of Pipli.[47] We are immediately struck by an inescapable fact when we examine this system: a concession by the Crown to a private individual of the type mentioned above could be of no value unless there was either a salary or an 'exclusion' principle involved. That is to say, if any person even without a concession could make a commercial voyage of exactly the same type as the concessionary, the concession could have no conceivable value. Where then did the concession derive its value? There were in fact two possible sources of value. In one set of ports, the concessionary was not given the exclusive right to make the voyage, but was instead given the position of Captain-Major of the fleet from the specified port of departure to that of destination, with the jurisdiction of purveyor of the estates of the deceased over all persons on the trading fleet. In the case of the Orissa voyages, for example, we are informed by an observer in 1581, 'without the post of *provedor dos defuntos* the concession would have no value'.[48]

In another set of ports – the so-called 'reserved ports' (*portos coutados*) – the concessionary had the exclusive right to trade over a particular commercial route, specified with respect both to port of departure and that of destination. Thus, with the system

[47] The earliest record of a voyage to 'Orixa' comes from 1564, and is published in Cunha Rivara, ed., *APO*, Fascículo V (2), Document 478, p. 549. Also see Documents 531 and 532 in the same volumes for grants from 1565. There is striking similarity between certain aspects of this system and the farming of land revenue, this in the sense that the concession could be used to 'colonise' a 'virgin commercial route', and bring it into the *Estado's* ambit.

[48] 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', ed. F.P. Mendes da Luz, *Boletim da Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra*, Volume XXI, 1953, pp. 1–144. See in particular p. 128, 'Isto que digo importão estas viageẽs he com o cargo de provedor de defuntos que levão, por que sem elle não valerão nada'.

of concessions, we see for the first time the introduction into the Bay of Bengal of a system of monopoly over commercial routes claimed by the Portuguese Crown. These monopolies involve the trade from Coromandel quite integrally; in the case of trade from Coromandel to Melaka, as well as that to Pegu, we see the introduction of this system of concessions and the displacement by it of the old system of Crown shipping by the late 1560s[49].

It is clear enough that the introduction of this system would have been, in the first instance and at the point of impact, detrimental to the commerce of Pulicat, which was up to 1560, the major centre of overseas trade from Coromandel, both in general, and to Melaka and Pegu. It was no longer possible from the late 1560s, when the concessions appear to have replaced the *naus del-Rei*, for the four or five ships which had customarily made the voyage to Melaka to continue to do so. Instead, the merchants who wished to trade on this route had to freight space on board the vessel of the concessionary. Since the trade to Melaka and that to Pegu represented, in the first half of the sixteenth century, the two principal branches of Pulicat's commerce, the effects of the new system were highly constraining; furthermore, combined with the sudden and substantial decline in internal trade to Pulicat in the late 1560s, following on the *de facto* dismantling of the city of Vijayanagara as a consumption centre, the net effect was a precipitous fall in the trade of the port. By the end of the sixteenth century, Pulicat was no more than a minor port and supplier of textile to other great ports (in particular the upstart Masulipatnam); the decline had been so rapid that Jan Huyghen van Linschoten does not even deign to mention Pulicat among the major ports of Coromandel in the 1580s.

As we shall see in the next chapter, this decline was mirrored in important ways by the rise of other Coromandel ports, notably Masulipatnam. Besides, in southern Coromandel, the port of Nagapattinam (with its satellite Naguru) was unobtrusively inching its way to prominence, which it finally achieved in large measure in the closing decade of the century. Before we enter into these questions, however, it is of some interest to turn to a consideration of trade on

[49] The discussion of the concession system is extensively based on the 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas'. However, the individual grants of concessions published elsewhere may also be used to some effect. We note that earlier grants were of the post of factor or scrivener on the *nau del-Rei*, while later grants are to the 'viagens' as such. Also see the 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', pp. 107–14. Thus, it is probable that the two great ships that Cesare Federici in 1569 described as departing from São Tomé, respectively for Melaka and Pegu, were concessionary ships. See Pinto, ed., *Viaggi di C. Federici*, pp. 30–1.

the south-west coast in the first three-quarters of the sixteenth century.

Kanara and Malabar trade: preliminary remarks

The section of India's western coast from Cape Comorin to Karwar – the so-called Malabar and Kanara coasts – has been studied in far more depth hitherto for the sixteenth century than has the Coromandel coast, with which the previous sections of this chapter were concerned. For historians of sixteenth century European expansion in Asia (to be treated as almost synonymous with Portuguese expansion), there is a certain obvious attraction in the region: it was along the Malabar coast that many of the principal Portuguese fortresses lay in the epoch. Indeed, the *Estado da Índia* without its bases at Kollam, Cochin and Cannanore, to name three of the principal Portuguese establishments, would have lost much of its logic and structure, and indeed scarcely be recognisable. It was to the Malabar coast that da Gama's fleet first arrived in 1498, and it has been a cliché of the expansion historiography ever since that what prompted da Gama's voyage summarised the *raison d'être* of the *Estado*: the 'search for Christians and Spices'. Yet, despite the abundance of studies, when one examines the voluminous historiography on trade on the Indian south-west coast in the sixteenth century, one is struck by a massive imbalance in terms of focus and coverage. Almost one half of the studies concern themselves with the Malabar coast in the first thirty years of that century, a period when voluminous Portuguese documentation makes itself available to the historian.[50] As the century progresses, the detailed studies become scarcer, and the acute shortage of archival material for a period of a quarter century, beginning in the 1550s, is reflected closely in the way the historiography concentrates itself. Finally, with the start of the Philippine period (1580–1640), there is a revival of studies – reflecting again the somewhat freer availability of documentation, albeit of a different character from that of the first half of the century.[51]

[50] For a characteristic example of this imbalance, see Bailey W. Diffie and George D. Winius, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415–1580*, Minneapolis, 1977, Chapters XII to XXII; again Kanara in the period before 1550 is scarcely mentioned in M.N. Pearson, *Coastal Western India*, New Delhi, 1981.

[51] The earlier evidence comes from collections such as the *Corpo Cronológico* and *Núcleo Antigo* in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, while the later (post-1580) period is documented by evidence from the Historical Archives, Goa, and the *Documentos Remetidos da Índia* collection (in 62 folio volumes) at the Torre do Tombo. These latter, as well as the evidence at the Simancas archives are

The imbalance is, however, not merely temporal but spatial. The Kanara coast – stretching from Mt Eli in the south to Karwar in the north – is almost wholly neglected for the period up to 1550, and in the half century that follows attention is drawn to it only briefly when three fortresses are set up there by the *Estado da Índia* in 1568–9 at Honawar, Basrur and Mangalore.[52] Finally, one encounters passing mention of the region in studies dealing with the final decade of the sixteenth century, when it becomes apparent that an increasing proportion of the pepper cargos on board the Lisbon-bound ships of the *Carreira da Índia* is procured in Kanara rather than in the Malabar region.[53] In brief then, existing writings on the south-west coast of India in the sixteenth century have both the strengths and weaknesses of an imperial historiography: where the empire extends its tentacles, historians shift their attention. The result is that, while some areas, subjects and classes of persons are remarkably well-illuminated, others are not.

The problem has in some ways been worse confounded by Niels Steensgaard's provocative study of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century Euro-Asian trade,[54] particularly since the portrait painted there of the *Estado* has come to assume the dimensions of a new orthodoxy. By treating the *Estado da Índia* through the sixteenth century as a single structure, Steensgaard facilitates comparison with the contrasting 'structure' – that of the national chartered Companies of the seventeenth century – but in the process loses sight of the evolution of the *Estado* itself. It may or may not be true that the attitude of the viceregal administration at Goa towards questions such as the pepper trade, appointments of captains of fortresses, and so on, was the same in the 1590s as in the 1530s; however, a study that assumes this to be true and uses elements drawn largely from the Hapsburg period to make general propositions of this nature is bound to reach such a conclusion. In large measure then, the attempt in the present chapter is to counterpose the idea of *evolution* both in the sixteenth century Asian trade from the coasts of southern India, and

largely related to the viceregal correspondence, with relatively few enclosures from the more distant outposts of the *Estado da Índia*, and hence lack the immediacy of the earlier documentation.

52 See B.S. Shastry, *Studies in Indo-Portuguese History*, Bangalore, 1981, Chapter V, pp. 54–5.

53 Yet the earliest detailed and coherent account of the pepper trade from Kanara deals with the early 17th century, and is that of A.R. Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire*, Cambridge, Mass., 1978.

54 Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, n. 2, especially Chapter II, pp. 81–113.

in the Portuguese imperial enterprise located there, to the more common unitary and atemporal vision of the period in its totality. Equally, given the lopsided nature of the historiography, those areas and periods which are relatively well-researched will receive less attention here than those concerning which the historiography says little.

Malabar in early sixteenth century Asian trade

In 1500, the Malabar coast – from Cape Comorin to Mt Eli – boasted an extensive involvement in both the coastal and long-distance trade networks. The coastal network encompassed commodities such as coconuts, coir, pepper, cardamom and rice, the last a major import item into the region from two surplus production areas – the Kanara coast, and the coast of Coromandel.[55] The long-distance trade on the other hand was relatively centralised, the major Malabar port in this respect being Calicut (or Kozhikode), with a lesser role assigned to other ports, among which one can point to Kollam (Quilon) and Cannanore as medium-sized centres. In this manner, each of the three major political structures in the Kerala of the period – Venad to the south, Calicut to the centre, and Kolathunad in the north – could claim to shelter a port of some importance in the long-distance trade. However, as has already been mentioned, Calicut was far and away the most important of the three, this despite a location that was none too convenient and a road thought to be not a little treacherous.[56] It was the fact that behind this port lay the power of the Samudri Rajas of Calicut, the ascendant power in the region c. 1500, that lent it its exalted position. Trade was oriented in two directions: to the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the ports of Gujarat on the one hand, and to Melaka and the eastern Bay of Bengal littoral on the other. One may state tentatively, without however being able to quantify the assertion, that it was the western arm – directed at the ports and markets of the Middle East – which dominated the commerce overall, although the other trade was not insignificant either.[57] The goods

[55] This is clearly described in the accounts from the early sixteenth century, those of Tomé Pires and Duarte Barbosa for example (both of which are referred to in detail ahead).

[56] This was believed true of the eighteenth century as well. See Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade, 1740–1800*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 1. 'Unwary vessels came to grief in the road at Calicut'.

[57] This might of course reflect the relative emphasis given to the two branches of the trade by Portuguese observers, who were naturally more interested in the trade to west Asia.

carried to the Middle East included – besides the supreme trade good, pepper – other spices such as ginger and cardamom, some textiles transshipped at Calicut, coconuts and their ancillary products and other odds and ends. The import into Malabar on the other hand consisted of gold and copper, a little silver, horses, silk, aromatics and other minor items. In the horse trade particularly, Cannanore appears as a major centre of import, and there is some evidence to show that the animals were carried overland from there to the southern viceroyalties of the Vijayanagara empire.

The trade, both coastal and overseas, was dominated in the main by Muslim mercantile communities, though Jews, Chetties from Coromandel, and *vanias* from Gujarat all traded in and from Calicut and other ports.[58] The Muslim communities were usually distinguished by the Portuguese into two groups: the 'Moors of the land' [*mouros da terra*] and the 'Moors from Arabia' [*mouros da Arábia*]. The distinction was in fact meant to distinguish the Mappila Muslims from all Middle Eastern Muslims; the latter, the so-called *Pardesi* Muslims, in fact came from a wide variety of regions besides the Arabian peninsula, and one encounters traders from Cairo, Turkey, Iraq and Persia among those settled in the trading towns of the Malabar coast. In the western arm of the overseas trade from Malabar (particularly that oriented towards Arabia and Persia), the *Pardesi* merchants dominated, and hence the Portuguese initially perceived a conflict of interest in particular with this group. The Mappilas, on the other hand, dominated the trade 'from India to India', this in the sense not only of the coastal trade, but the eastern branch, the trade to Pegu, Mergui, Melaka and points east.[59]

The broad outlines of the Portuguese presence along the Malabar coast in the period 1500–30 are too well known to require repetition. Suffice it to say that they rapidly entered into conflictual relations with the Samudri Raja and the *Pardesi* merchants of Calicut, and encouraged the port and state of Cochin in both the commercial and military senses to develop itself as a rival to Calicut. Their procurement of commodities for the cargoes of Europe-bound carracks saw them entering in the main into amicable relations with Mappila and Syrian Christian traders, whom they used as brokers and interme-

[58] See Dames, ed., *The Book Of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume II, pp. 71–8; also Geneviève Bouchon, *Mamale de Cananor: Un Adversaire de l'Inde Portugaise, 1507–1528*, Geneva, 1975, pp. 31–7.

[59] See Geneviève Bouchon, 'Les Musulmans du Kerala à l'époque de la découverte portugaise', *Mare Luso-Indicum,* II, 1972, pp. 3–59, especially pp. 50–3.

diaries in the purchase of pepper, ginger, etc., and in the sale of the goods brought from Europe.[60] Yet this amicable nexus did not last long, and, by 1530, the Portuguese had entered into headlong conflict with several of the principal families of Mappila traders on the coast, partly on account of premeditated policies, and partly due to the brutal acts of individual Portuguese attached to the *Estado*.[61] In 1550, a new equilibrium of relations was struck; the Portuguese state managed to reach an accommodation with some major *Pardesi* traders, such as Khoja Shams-ud-din Gilani of Cannanore,[62] while on the other hand the struggle with some elements among the Mappilas was intensifying. The hostility reached levels where Mappila traders actively worked in the kingdoms of Sri Lanka to oppose the Portuguese, and on the Malabar coast declared a *jihad* or Holy War against the *Estado*; this hostility continued in one or the other form well into the seventeenth century.[63]

Within twenty years of their arrival in Asian waters, the Portuguese had, by means of a series of raids on departing fleets at Calicut and Kollam, and by maintaining patrolling squadrons both in the north-western fringes of the Indian Ocean and off the Malabar ports, struck vital blows at the trade between Calicut, Kollam and Cannanore and the Red Sea. Yet, as Vitorino Magalhaẽs Godinho notes, cracks in the Portuguese 'system' had already begun to appear in the second decade of the sixteenth century.[64] In brief, there were three reasons why – after a period of some three decades – the Portuguese *Estado*'s control over the flow of spices into the Red Sea began to slacken. All three reasons had a single root: the divergence of interests between

60 Jan Kieniewicz, 'The Portuguese factory and the pepper trade in Malabar during the 16th century', *IESHR*, Volume VI, No. 1, 1969, pp. 61–85; Stephen F. Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier*, Oxford, 1980.

61 Two of these acts were the killing of a kinsman of Mamale de Cananor, turning the latter into an inveterate enemy of the *Estado*, and the assassination in 1545, of Abu Bakr Ali, *qazi* of Cananur. Many Portuguese by the 1530s gloried in somewhat brutal acts against the Mappilas. Illustrative of this mentality is the letter from Miguel Ferreira to the King of Portugal dated 26 November 1539, *ANTT*, CC, I/66/41.

62 See Luís de Albuquerque and Inácio Guerreiro, 'Khoja Shams-ud-din, Comerciante de Cananor na primeira metade do século XVI', *Actas do II Seminário Internacional de História Indo-Portuguesa*, Lisbon, 1985, pp. 227–40. The growing cooperation with such persons as Shams-ud-din was in part the consequence of strategic considerations; from him, the Portuguese received crucial information on the Ottoman Empire.

63 For an old-fashioned and partisan account, see K.M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese*, Bombay, 1929; more recently, the balanced and interesting account by Stephen F. Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier*, pp. 33–60.

64 Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, Volume III, pp. 106–8.

the epicentre of the Portuguese empire, at Lisbon, and the sprawling *Estado da Índia* centred around Goa. Thus it was the logic of the latter which dictated that Ormuz – captured and recaptured on successive occasions by Afonso de Albuquerque – be used not to seal the Persian Gulf but as a 'choke-point' where customs would be gathered. Since – with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire eastwards in the period – the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf became rapidly integrated through coastal and overland connections in the same period,[65] there was little meaning in trying to seal off the Red Sea while opening the door to Europe through the Persian Gulf. A second reason for the revival of the Red Sea trade was that the growth of private trade – both independent and in collaboration with local merchants – by Portuguese in Asia made any strict enforcement of the official line highly unlikely. And thirdly, the political exigencies – whether the need to gather information, or the need to maintain good relations with Asian monarchs – dictated that *cartazes* be issued rather more liberally than Lisbon might have chosen.[66] This last aspect had been recognised as early as 1515, when Albuquerque himself granted the Samudri *raja* a certain number of navicerts for the merchants based at his port, enabling them to resume trade with Aden and Jiddah.[67] The problem then was not purely and simply one of the failure of the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* in seizing Aden, and closing the gates of Bab-el-Mandeb. Godinho remarks that, 'It is most probable that if the Portuguese had installed themselves at the entrance to the Straits, they would by choice have fomented an increase in the traffic there, just as they did in the Persian Gulf on account of Ormuz'[68] but this may seem like something of an exaggeration. To accept this would be tantamount to stating with Steensgaard that the Portuguese were above all a 'redistributive enterprise', interested primarily in the maximisation of customs revenue.[69] The reality – even on the basis of Godinho's own evidence – is rather more complex. It is evident that a lack of

65 Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, Volume III, p. 133. '. . . a distinção entre a rota de Ormuz e a rota de Meca perdeu todo o sentido'.

66 On this see, besides Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, Luís de Albuquerque and Inácio Guerreiro, 'Khoja Shams-ud-din, Comerciante de Cananor. . .', n. 62.

67 Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, Volume III, p. 110.

68 Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, p. 134. 'Alias, é muitíssimo provável que, se os Portuguese se tivessem instalado à entradā do Estreito, tivessem de preferência fomentado o incremento desta via, tal como fizeram no Golfo Pérsico por causa de Ormuz'.

69 Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, pp. 83, 88. For a critique of this view see (*inter alia*) M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz., 'The structures of trade in Asia in the 16th and 17th centuries', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, IV, 1980, pp. 1–43.

resources determined the mode of action of the Portuguese *Estado* from early on; this very same lack of resources being the root cause on account of which Ormuz had to be promoted, the reason too why the state was unable to maintain an initially centralised mode of functioning – giving more and more away by way of benefices – and finally the underpinning which explains why the *Estado* in the course of the sixteenth century increasingly treated Asian littoral states from a position of weakness rather than strength. It was precisely this lack of resources and military weight which saw the *Estado* desirous of checking, but eventually unable to stem, the rapid rise of Aceh and the Sumatra-Red Sea nexus.[70] Thus, the redistributive aspects of the Portuguese enterprise must be seen in the broader context of the resources available to them in Asia at various points in time.

By about 1550, the situation on the Malabar coast had stabilised somewhat, but the pattern of trade from the Malabar ports was now rather different from that of fifty years ago. In the first place, the trade from Calicut and Cannanore had fallen – despite the fact that the trade to the north-west littoral of the Arabian Sea had by no means been dealt a death blow. The port of growing importance was Cochin, in the trade both with Gujarat and with the Persian Gulf, as well as in the eastern arm of the trade. As the trade from Cochin to Bengal, Pegu and Melaka will be dealt with at greater length in a separate section, we may now turn our attention to the Kanara coast, which, as we have noted, is seldom studied at any level of detail in the extant historiography.

The vicissitudes of Bhatkal, 1500–70

The Kanara coast, located between Mt. Eli and Karwar, being criss-crossed by numerous rivers and estuaries, it sheltered a large number of functioning ports in the period around 1500, when the Portuguese first came in contact with the area. From north to south, these ports included Mirjan, Honawar, Bhatkal, Barkur, Basrur, Mangalore and Kumbla, with Bhatkal falling fairly in the centre of this stretch of coast.[71] Political control over the region was divided

[70] There was no lack of plans to attack and subdue the Acehnese menace, but these could never bear fruit; see C.R. Boxer, 'A note on the Portuguese reactions to the revival of the Red Sea spice trade and the rise of Atjeh, 1540–1600', *Journal of South-East Asian History*, Volume X, No. 3, December 1969, pp. 421–23, as also Arun Dasgupta, 'Acheh in Indonesian trade and politics, 1600–1641', Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell, 1962, Chapter I, pp. 32–50.

[71] M.L. Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I, pp. 184–97; Armando Cortesão, ed., *A Suma Oriental de Tomé Pires e o Livro de Francisco Rodrigues*,

and complex. There were numerous coastal principalities, the greater part of which were under the broad aegis of the Vijayanagara empire, after its successful military campaign in the region late in the 1480s.[72] In the north, the Gersoppa principality abutted on the Adil Shah's territories; it was under this principality that Mirjan and Honawar fell. Bhatkal itself, further to the south, was set amidst territory controlled by a line of Jain chieftains, who in the fifteenth century had patronised extensive constructions in the area, such as a bridge to the south of the town, as well as the ornate and impressive Jatapa Naikana Chandranatheswara temple in the town proper.[73] Further south, there were the chiefs of Gangolli, Barkur (referred to by the Portuguese as the Nayakas of Tuluva), Bangher and Ullal. It would appear that the overarching imperial structure of Vijayanagara was content to leave control of the rural areas to these chiefs. The collection of land revenue seems to have been alienated by the state structure in large measure to local institutions, in particular temples and Jain *mathas*. However, the Vijayanagara rulers maintained a direct nexus with some of the small mercantile townships of the coast, some of which – like Basrur – appear to have enjoyed a large degree of autonomy from the chiefs of the region, dealing directly with the empire.[74] Most important of all, around 1500 the Vijayanagara court was anxious to preserve control over the major metropolitan port of the area – Bhatkal – as well as the 'great western road' leading from the capital city over the Ghats to the port.[75] The western viceroyalty of the empire, in 1515 governed by a nephew of Krishna Deva Raya,

Coimbra, 1978, fls. 125v–126r. Since I have often used this Portuguese edition rather than the Hakluyt Society translation, many references are to folio numbers, to facilitate cross referencing. On the trade of the Kanara coast, also see Luciano Ribeiro, ed., 'Uma Geografia Quinhentista', *Studia*, Volume 7, January 1961, pp. 240–1.

72 Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I, p. 187, footnote 1.

73 See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 16 Volumes, Oxford 1908, Volume VIII (Berhampore to Bombay), pp. 90–1. Also Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Company*, 4 Volumes, London, 1854, Volume I, p. 76.

74 For a discussion of this question, see Chapter V, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'The Portuguese, the port of Basrur and the rice trade, 1600–1650', *IESHR*, Volume XXI (4), 1984.

75 The 'Great Western road' led from Bhatkal to Vijayanagara through Zambuja and Darcha. See N. Venkataramanayya, *Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagara*, pp. 295–7; also Jean Deloche, *La Circulation en Inde avant la révolution des transports: La Voie de Terre*, p. 78. This was also the road used by emissaries from Goa to Vijayanagara, as is evident from the case of Albuquerque's ambassador, Frei Luís, who went by brigantine to Bhatkal and went overland from there. On this, see Gaspar Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, ed. M. Lopes de Almedia, Tomo II, p. 31.

exerted an influence then on the government of the port, though the Jain chiefs were not wholly excluded either.[76]

Bhatkal, located in 13° 59′ N, and 74° 32′ E, on the southern bank of the river Skandaholeya, had in the first half of the sixteenth century a rather different character from the other ports on the Kanara coast. To put it simply, Bhatkal was a metropolitan port with multifarious functions, the others were minor ports on the coastal network. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, Portuguese squadrons had already come into contact with Bhatkal. For some reason, possibly connected with the use of latitude navigation techniques, the fleets coming from Portugal frequently made landfall on the Indian west coast at Bhatkal, then sailed on to Cochin.[77] Bhatkal was located some three kilometres upriver on the southern side of the Skandaholeya river, the river itself not being navigable by large vessels. Duarte Barbosa describes it as 'of no great size', while Afonso de Albuquerque declared contemptuously of Bhatkal that 'it has neither a port nor a bar in which even a *batel* [ship's boat] can enter, nor does it have the disposition of the bar and port of Goa, in which the carracks of the Moors enter fully laden'.[78] Like Cannanore further to the south, however, Bhatkal had a cove and a beach where horses and other cargo could be landed with ease.[79] This was to the south of the river mouth, while immediately to the north there was a hillock, where the merchants of the town had some cannons placed, commanding the river's entrance. A further disadvantage of the port, which Albuquerque failed to remark, was the existence of two islands just off the bar; in fact the channel between the nearer of the two and the shore was both shallow and narrow, so that the larger ships had to sail between the islands in order to anchor off the river mouth, not the easiest task imaginable.[80]

[76] Barbosa mentions the nephew of Krishna Deva Raya in Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I, p. 190. 'The King of Narsyngua has bestowed this place upon a nephew of his together with other regions hard by'.

[77] To cite an example, Vicente Sodré in 1503 on his arrival from Europe made landfall on the Indian coast at Bhatkal (Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo I, p. 340). Since in the first twenty years of the sixteenth century this was a fairly frequent occurrence, it is possible that the ships crossed the Arabian sea navigating at the particular latitude (14° N) and hence made landfall at this spot.

[78] Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I, p. 187; also see letter from Afonso de Albuquerque to the King of Portugal dated 4 December 1513, *ANTT*, CC, I/14/15, in *CAA*, I, p. 199.

[79] For the advantages of Cannanore as a port, see G. Bouchon, *Mamale de Cananor*, n. 58, pp. 28–9.

[80] Bhatkal is described in the greatest detail in Diogo do Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década V, Livro IX, Capítulo II, pp. 300–2.

Yet despite this, Bhatkal was in 1500 a flourishing port, described by Tomé Pires as 'second only to Goa and Chaul' in the broad region.[81] Unlike the ports of Malabar and in particular Calicut in the same period, Bhatkal in its long-distance trade was more or less exclusively oriented to the west, with its two major maritime arms stretching out to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The exports from the port included white rice (particularly the variety termed *jirigai*), sugar, iron, some textiles, ginger and pepper; the imports on the other hand were of copper and gold, as well as – and this is of some importance – the horses of Arabia and Persia. The rice trade was not exclusive to this port, and Basrur to the south was also important as a rice exporter, sending the commodity to diverse destinations, including Ormuz, Aden, Shihr, Cananur and Calicut, if one is to credit Barbosa.[82] The commodity structure as well as the dimensions of the import trade of Bhatkal were what fundamentally distinguished it from the other Kanara ports, and this was made possible by its extensive hinterland, in particular its link to the capital city of Vijayanagara. In contrast to Basrur – a port dominated by a tightly knit group of Saraswat merchants – Bhatkal had a truly cosmopolitan mercantile community, wherein one can enumerate at least four distinct elements: these were the *navayat* Muslims, who claimed origins in Persia; the amorphous group of temporary residents, hailing from Cairo, Arabia, Iraq and Persia, who as in Kerala were termed *Pardesis*; the Hindu traders of the port, largely Saraswats; and the Jains, a small pocket of whom survived under the patronage of the local chieftains. To govern over these communities, the Vijayanagara rulers had appointed two heads from amongst the residents; in the second decade of the sixteenth century, one of these was one Dama Chatim, probably a Saraswat, and the other described as 'Kaysar Moor, a eunuch who used to be a creature of Khwaja Atar [*wazir* of Ormuz]'. There are some indications that these heads held their positions as a revenue farm, paying the Vijayanagara court for the privilege.[83]

[81] Cortesão, ed., *A Suma Oriental*, fl. 125v, 'batecala he porto Despois de Guoa e chaull muy homrrado e de gramde neguoceaçam.... De todos estes portos dos Regnos Dos canarijs a mais homrrada cousa era baticala p̄ Rezam Dos mujtos mercadores'.

[82] Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I, p. 194.

[83] Barbosa, *ibid*, Volume I, pp. 189–90; Cortesão, ed., *A Suma Oriental*, fl. 125v. There are other references as well in the documentation of the period to 'Damechati', such as in Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, *História do descobrimento e conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, ed. M. Lopes de Almeida, Book III, Chapters 89, 118 [Volume I, pp. 707, 722].

The tenor of early relations between the Portuguese and this port was unmistakably hostile. In 1502, the first Portuguese squadron to put in at the port (under the command of Dom Vasco da Gama) did so having first attacked shipping at Honawar; as a consequence, it was received with a bombardment from the hill-top overlooking the river mouth at Bhatkal. After a skirmish, a peace was agreed on. On this occasion itself, the Portuguese commented on 'the many *naos* of the Moors, because this port was a great loading place for rice, iron and sugar, which was taken all over India.[84] Under the treaty of peace, the Portuguese, on account of *force majeure*, persuaded the local Jain ruler to pay a 'tribute' annually to the King of Portugal, and this was successfully collected in 1503.[85] Within a year, however, the local merchants had decided to resist. In 1505, D. Lourenço de Almeida's fleet was greeted with a bombardment from the hillock, as had happened on the earlier occasion, but eventually gained the upper hand, entered the town, raided the local warehouses and departed, plentifully supplied with rice and sugar. The relationship between the town's merchants and the *Estado* continued in much the same vein for the rest of the decade, and the merchants learnt to maintain a lookout on one of the islands off the river-mouth, to warn of the approach of a Portuguese squadron.[86]

Already in this period, the Portuguese governors had begun using the port of Bhatkal as an outlet for the copper and some of the other goods they received in the cargoes from Europe, in addition to buying rice and sugar there. From as early as 1505, a Portuguese factor was maintained there intermittently, to facilitate purchases, make sales and collect the tribute.[87] In February 1509, the treaty of 'submission' was renewed, and the local ruler agreed to hand over, in place of the earlier unspecified amount, 2,000 bales (77,500 kgs.) of white rice each year.[88]

In the first decade of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese had begun attacking coastal shipping around Bhatkal, as well as the occasional ship from the Red Sea which they found there. However, from 1510 onwards, this inchoate set of individual actions began to coalesce into something resembling a policy. There were successive attacks on shipping in the port, particularly that bound for the Red

[84] Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo I, pp. 289–90.
[85] Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo I, p. 411.
[86] Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo I, p. 586.
[87] Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I; *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford, 1908, Volume VIII, pp. 90–1.
[88] Castanheda, *História*, Livro II, Chapter 102, Volume I, p. 443.

Sea, but including some vessels bound for Ormuz as well. For instance, in March 1510, Jorge da Silveira, Captain-Major of three sail, captured three ships off Bhatkal that were destined for Ormuz, on the grounds that, despite their *cartazes*, they carried pepper and ginger, commodities on which the Portuguese Crown claimed a monopoly. A fourth was captured since it carried no *cartaz* at all.[89] Other ships bound for or from the Red Sea were taken too in the early years of the decade 1510–20, and Albuquerque, with fine cynicism, even sold four of the crew members of one of these ships back to the master, one Khwaja Biqi, for the sum of 500 *pardaus*.[90] By 1513, Albuquerque had made up his mind to ruin Bhatkal. His logic was clear; with Ormuz in his hands, he would divert the entire trade in horses to Goa, and since (he argued) the existing relations between Vijayanagara and Bijapur were such that they were heading for a conflict, in which 'without doubt, the one who has the horses from Arabia and Persia will win', the Portuguese *Estado* would then hold the key.[91] For this, he went on to argue, it would be necessary to 'dismantle the port of Bhatkal, which has no logic except through the horse trade and that of the goods of Ormuz'. He offered to buy from Krishna Deva Raya all the goods that were normally sold at Bhatkal, while selling the Vijayanagara rulers all the horses they desired via Goa. Almost in desperation, a counter-offer was made, to the effect that the Portuguese could have the revenues of either Bhatkal or Basrur, so long as the horse trade through the Kanara ports was allowed to continue.[92] Albuquerque had made up his mind, however, and he redoubled his offer to give the merchants of Bhatkal *cartazes*, so long as they went from there to the Persian Gulf, returning however to Goa, where they would have to land the horses they had purchased.[93] Tomé Pires, anticipating the success of

[89] See the account of goods captured, *ANTT*, CC, II/21/3, published in *CAA*, Volume III, p. 17. Numerous other instances exist in the same period. See for example Castanheda, *História*, Livro II, Cap. 102, Volume I, p. 511; Volume I, pp. 521–2, Livro II, Cap. 13; Volume I, p. 579, Capítulo 36; Volume I, p. 707, Cap. 89.

[90] The capture of these ships is mentioned in Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo II, p. 197; the sale of the hostages is documented in an order from Albuquerque to Diogo Correa, captain of Cannanore, dated 1 March 1512, *ANTT*, CC, II/30/205, in *CAA*, VII, p. 14.

[91] Albuquerque to the King, 4th December 1513, *ANTT*, CC, I/14/15, in *CAA*, I, p. 199. '. . . . sem comtradiçam, vemcera huum ao outro aqele que ouver os cavalos darabia e da persia'. See also a later letter from Albuquerque to the King, *ANTT*, CC, I/16/120, dated November 1514, published in *CAA*, Tomo I, p. 342.

[92] Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo II, pp. 379–80. Note the contrast between this and the earler offer by the Vijayanagara rulers in 1505, for which see Castanheda, *História*, Livro II, Capítulo 17, Volume I, p. 251; Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo I, p. 581.

[93] See the references in note 91, *supra*, as also Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo II, p. 336.

the Governor's policies, wrote about this time that Bhatkal was now 'much reduced' on account of the centralisation effected by the capture of Goa and the subsequent policies.[94]

This was to prove a rather hasty conclusion though, as we discover from reading Barbosa's account. Here we discover that, as late as 1518, 'many ships still come hither [to Bhatkal] every year from Ormus, [besides]...a few ships belonging to the Moors of Meca [which] also venture to come into this spot to take in loads of spices, notwithstanding that by the rules and orders of our people, they are forbidden to do so'.[95] The factor maintained by the Portuguese off and on at Bhatkal seemed powerless to prevent this, and, on Albuquerque's death, we are told by even the Portuguese chroniclers that the 'Moors' of Bhatkal altogether lost their fear of the Portuguese. The first manifestation of this was a quarrel in late 1515, in which thirty-four Portuguese crewmen from a ship commanded by Simão de Andrade, which was at Bhatkal to pick up rice and sugar, were killed.[96] It is with some surprise that one finds thereafter that the Portuguese *Estado*, in a reversal of Albuquerque's policy – which was to hasten the ruin of the port – begins to patronise it from 1518 onwards. Between 1518 and 1530, annual voyages were made by a fleet of Crown-owned vessels from Bhatkal to Ormuz, laden with iron, rice, sugar, ginger and pepper. The earliest mention of such a commercial venture is the fleet of thirteen sail under António de Saldanha, and he, we are told, 'had brought an order from the King that he make three of these voyages', in successive years as Captain-Major of the fleet.[97] In 1519, he made the same voyage, this time commanding four sail. Again in 1523, the Governor D. Duarte de Meneses himself took three galleons, four galleys, three caravels and four navettes to Bhatkal, loaded them there with 'drugs, some pepper and rice, sugar and iron' and went on to Ormuz. In 1524, four of the ships pertaining to the *Carreira da Índia* were sent on the same voyage, since there was no pepper for them to carry to Europe, so that they were otherwise idle.[98] It appears to have been customary for the Captain-Majorship of these voyages to be granted to *fidalgos*, with the usual perquisites – namely a share of the cargo space that they could fill with their own goods, or rent out. At least

[94] Cortesão, ed., *A Suma Oriental*, fl. 125v.
[95] Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume II, p. 189.
[96] Castanheda, *História*, Livro IV, Volume I, p. 874; Correia, *Lendas*, Volume II, 469–70.
[97] Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo II, pp. 536, 565.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 742 for the voyage of 1523; for that of 1524, p. 850.

two persons arrived from Lisbon in the 1520s already carrying royal commissions to enable them to serve as Captains-Major on the Bhatkal-Ormuz line for three successive years. One was Francisco de Brito, who arrived in 1524, in the fleet carrying the Conde de Vidigueira, and the other was Fernando de Lima, who arrived in India in 1528. So coveted was this voyage that in February 1526, Lopo Vaz de Sampayo, Governor of the *Estado*, rewarded his favourites by 'sending twelve gross carracks, which he divided among those *fidalgos* who he felt were his friends and to their relatives, and had them load up in Bhatkal with rice, sugar and iron [in competition with] ... the many goods that the ships of the Moors took to Ormuz'.[99] The last recorded voyage of this type was made not long after, in 1530. This voyage was the last of those granted to Fernando de Lima, and in the previous year he had taken three galleons laden with goods from Bhatkal to the Gulf. On the next occasion, since the ships of the *Carreira* were once again idle, as in 1524, Nuno da Cunha sent four of them under de Lima to Ormuz from Bhatkal; these ships were, according to Gaspar Correia, 'laden until they could carry no more, being great carracks, in which they loaded goods worth over 200,000 *cruzados*'.[100] The disaster that befell this fleet – three of the four ships being lost without a trace, perhaps on account of overloading – with the loss of 400 men on board, would seem to have contributed in large measure to the decision to abandon the use of Crown shipping on this line. However, one must also bear in mind – as has been pointed out in the preceding sections – that the 1530s see the first wave of decentralisation in the Portuguese Asian enterprise. Finances were now insecure, leakages on such voyages were many, and it is not actually clear whether, on balance, these were great commercial successes from the viewpoint of the Crown. As a contemporary observer pointed out in the context of a similar voyage made with Crown shipping, that on the route Goa – Pulicat – Melaka – Goa, 'the captain makes as much with one hundred *bahars* of cargo space, as the King, Our Lord, with three hundred.'[101]

If Portuguese Crown shipping participated in the trade from Bhatkal to Ormuz in the period 1518 – 30, the Asian traders of the port were scarcely excluded as a consequence. In theory of course,

[99] Castanheda, *História*, Livro VI, Cap. LXXI, Volume II, p. 264; Livro VII, p. 517. Also see Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo III, pp. 283, 299. For the case of Lopo Vaz de Sampayo and the ships sent in February 1526, see Correia, *Lendas*, pp. 19–20.

[100] The disaster encountered by the fleet sent in 1530 is recounted in Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo III, pp. 341–2.

[101] 'Livro que trata das Coisas da Coisas da Índia e do Japão', ed. Adelino de Almeida Calado, p. 42.

they were forbidden to import horses into Bhatkal, but whether they obeyed the rule that required them to sell the animals at Goa is open to question. Still, in the 1520s, the Portuguese sources cited above testify to the great trade carried on with Ormuz in the 'Moorish ships' of Bhatkal, again driving home the fact that Tomé Pires' vision of Bhatkal in decline *circa* 1515 was a chimera. The Portuguese factor at Bhatkal – in 1530 Diogo Cerveira, in 1539 Jorge de Freitas – was kept busy issuing *cartazes* to shipping from the port, while at the same time attempting to collect the rice tribute, and carrying on buying and selling activities, both for the Crown and for Governors in their individual capacity.[102] In 1524, for example, the Governor D. Duarte de Meneses, on his way home after the completion of his term of office, 'went to Bhatkal, where he delayed his departure, buying textiles and other goods for his liberty chests for the homeward journey'.[103] Occasionally, the factor engaged in the purchase of saltpeter, and even – on at least one occasion in 1523 – pepper to supplement that bought at Kollam and Cannanore.[104].

The trade carried on by Bhatkal's shipowners in the 1520s was not wholly innocuous from the Portuguese viewpoint though. Underneath the velvet glove of cordiality, the *Estado* frequently brandished the mailed fist, threatening severe reprisals if the 'pirates' of Malabar were allowed shelter in and around Bhatkal, or if there were a delay in paying the tribute. The recalcitrant attitude of the trading community of the port emerges not only from these petty incidents but from their participation in the contraband trade to the Red Sea, indicating that there was a seed of truth in the chronicler Castanheda's assertion that, after the death of Albuquerque, 'the Moors [of Bhatkal] lost their fear from then on, and there were thieves on that coast who robbed the friends of the Portuguese, and even the Portuguese themselves if they could catch them off guard.'[105] To the list of such 'piratical' activities, one might add that they sailed to the Red Sea and South Arabia without the *cartazes* of the factor in Bhatkal.

For evidence of this, one turns to the *Tarikh al-Shihri*, one of the Hadrami chronicles, pertaining to the late 1520s and early 1530s.[106]

[102] See Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo III, p. 354, on Diogo Cerveira, and Tomo IV, p. 98 on Jorge de Freitas. The latter continued as factor in Bhatkal well into the 1540s.
[103] Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo II, p. 836.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 778.
[105] Castanheda, *História*, Livro IV, Volume I, p. 875.
[106] The *Tarikh al-Shihri* is published in R.B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast, Hadrami Chronicles*, Oxford, 1963, and the events summarised in the text here are referred to on pp. 55, 62–3, 68 and 71.

The writer of the chronicle, based at Shihr on the south Arabian coast, informs us of several ships from Bhatkal in that vicinity between 1529 and 1534. In 1529–30, there is a ship from 'Baticala' at al-Shihr, which curiously enough carries on board a Portuguese private trader, who demands and receives a safe-conduct to trade in the port. In 1531–2, there is the description of a pitched battle between a 'Frankish grab' and a vessel from Bhatkal, of which an account is also available in Barros's chronicle of the period. In 1533–4, a cruising fleet of Portuguese vessels is said to have captured a ship from Bhatkal between al-Shihr and Aden, while, in 1535, another vessel from the same port is mentioned as being captured *en route* to Jiddah. In the last instance, there was a curious epilogue. The Portuguese brought the vessel to al-Shihr, where the Sultan – who clearly had a shrewd head for business – ransomed it for 3,000 *ashrafis*, subsequently demanding and receiving 7,000 *ashrafis* from the rightful owner for restitution. These references are of particular significance, since the chronicle carries no corresponding mention of navigation from Calicut or Cannanore to the Red Sea in the period. If we assume then that for every ship from Bhatkal apprehended by the Portuguese fleets, some passed through the gates of Bab-el-Mandeb successfully, we have a significant new dimension to the revival of the Red Sea spice trade, as posited by Boxer and Godinho, among others. Since it is generally agreed that this revival can be dated from about 1530 – a date when Acehnese participation could not have been significant on the route, while trade from Malabar was evidently limited – the role of ships from Bhatkal assumes a place of greater importance than has been assigned to them hitherto.[107]

By the early 1540s, those in power in the *Estado da Índia* were increasingly disgusted with the mercantile community resident at Bhatkal. Early in 1542, a small Portuguese fleet attacked Bhatkal and Barkur, on the pretext that there were 'thieves' dens' (*ladroeiras*) in the vicinity. The ambience seemed particularly propitious for this action, since Achyuta Raya had just died at Vijayanagara, so that – given the uncertainty attending imperial succession – no repercussions were anticipated from that quarter.[108] Later in the same

[107] In particular, the account in V.M. Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, Volume III, pp. 82–134, wholly ignores the role of Bhatkal. Further, while discussing what he calls the 'sumatro-javanese' revival, Godinho fails to take into account the problem of how this source of pepper could have been important in the period 1530–50. Boxer, 'Portuguese reactions to Atjeh', makes it quite clear that the rise of Aceh was a phenomenon from the second half of the century in the main.

[108] Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo IV, p. 252.

year, in September 1542, the Governor of the *Estado da Índia*, Martim Afonso de Sousa, who had a penchant for raids (regarding them as a simple and effective way of replenishing a depleted treasury), attacked the port once again – claiming that the rice tribute had not been paid. According to Gaspar Correia, whose account is one of three we have of the incident, the merchants of the town – being forewarned – obstructed the channel of the river, and gathered in a body under some palm trees, prepared to repulse the Portuguese by force if necessary. There was an extended skirmish, in which those on land as well as the raiding fleet took recourse to artillery. Finally, the town was stormed by a landing party, and – as Correia has it – there was a good deal of indiscriminate looting. In the course of the action, even the house of the Portuguese factor, Jorge de Freitas, did not escape, Portuguese soldiers carrying off goods belonging to the Crown itself![109] The extent of damage to the town was apparently exaggerated by Diogo do Couto (whose account is one of the three extant), since a few years later, we find the trade of the port flourishing once again. The anti-Portuguese elements were again on the ascendant, as we may infer from an incident in 1547, when two Portuguese foists were captured in the area, and the horses and other goods on board taken away by some residents of Bhatkal. When the Portuguese threatened reprisals, the Jain 'Queen' of Bhatkal restituted the goods, but the offenders were not brought to book.[110]

We have already suggested that, from 1530 on, shipping from Bhatkal to the Red Sea had resumed in good measure, a development that can conceivably be linked with the revival of the trade in pepper with Jiddah. Where did this pepper originate however? Two possibilities should be considered: first that the pepper was grown in Malabar and was transshipped at Bhatkal; secondly, that the pepper was from Kanara itself. To support the first, we have Duarte Barbosa's comment concerning the 'great store' of pepper brought in coastal *zambucos* to Bhatkal from Malabar. Further, if we accept V.M. Godinho's view, there is little other option than to believe that the pepper was Malabar pepper, since he asserts, '[it was] in the course of the sixteenth century that the creepers of *piper nigrum* extended to the north, and from about 1565, the pepper of Kanara enters the

[109] For three versions of this raid, see Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década V, Livro IX, Cap. II; Castanheda, *História*, Cap. XXXI, Volume II, pp. 943–5; Correia, *Lendas*, IV, pp. 257–9.

[110] Correia, *Lendas*, IV, p. 618.

scene in the oceanic commerce'.[111] In keeping with this view, he estimates the total production of pepper in south-west India *circa* 1515 as congruent with production in Malabar; thus Kanara production in the first half of the sixteenth century is estimated by him at zero. Does an examination of the evidence permit such a view? I would argue that there appears to be considerable reason to hold the contrary opinion. In 1510, we find ships loaded with pepper at Bhatkal, headed for Ormuz.[112] In 1523, the fleet of D. Duarte de Meneses loads pepper at Bhatkal for Ormuz, and, in the same year, pepper is purchased in the port *to supplement* that bought in Kollam and Cannanore.[113] Seven years later, in 1530, Afonso Mexia wrote to the Portuguese King, 'Between Batecalla and Guoa, there are certain places by name Honor, Mergem and Amcolla, in which I have information that they collect each year four to five thousand *cruzados* worth of pepper, and take it to Dio, and Ormuz, and Juda [Jiddah], which is taken by Moors...'; in 1540, an agreement signed by the Governor of the *Estado da Índia* with the chieftains of Gersoppa stipulates that no pepper be allowed out of the area, except when sold to the *Estado*. This precaution would scarcely seem necessary unless there were pepper in the area.[114] The most damaging piece of evidence is from 1547 though, when Bernaldo de Fonseca, captain of Kollam, faced with the considerable traffic in pepper to the Red Sea, suggests that pepper producing lands be divided up: the stretch from Kollam to Cochin would serve to supply carracks bound for Lisbon, that *from Calicut to Bhatkal* the Red Sea trade.[115] There could be no clearer indication that pepper produced in Kanara was already worth reckoning much before the 1560s. We find confirmation of this a little later. In 1548, Rui Gonçalves de Caminha, *vedor da fazenda* of the Portuguese *Estado* wrote to the viceroy at the end of a cruise up the west coast of India, 'In Bhatkal, I found six or seven *naus* laden with drugs and iron, and the Devil alone knows if they all carry pepper

[111] Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Volume I, p. 189. Godinho's remark is to be found in *Os Descobrimentos*, Volume II, 185–6.

[112] *ANTT*, CC, II/21/3, in *CAA*, III, p. 17.

[113] Correia, *Lendas*, II, pp. 742, 778.

[114] See the letter from Afonso Mexia at Cochin to the King of Portugal, *ANTT*, CC, I/44/61, dated 15 January 1530; also the treaty between the ruler of Gersoppa and D. Estêvão da Gama, in J.F. Judice Biker, *Colecção de Tratados e Concertos de Pazes*, 14 Volumes, Lisbon, 1881–7, Volume I, pp. 96–7, dated 2 November 1540.

[115] *ANTT*, Colecção de São Lourenço II, letter from Bernaldo de Fonseca at Coulão to D. João de Castro, dated 25 May 1547, in *CSL*, II, p. 359. Curiously enough, Godinho notes the existence of this document (*Os Descobrimentos*, III, pp. 129–30) but continues to maintain that it was only in the mid-1560s that Kanara pepper enters maritime commerce.

bound for Meca and Muscat, with *cartazes* from our captain Dom Diogo'.[116] He was able temporarily to impede their departure by confiscating their *cartazes* on the grounds that the annual tribute of two thousand bales of rice had not been paid, but noted, 'It seems to me it will be handed over in a few days' after which the ships would be free to leave.

In the succeeding decade of the 1550s, references to the port of Bhatkal are sparse, but one infers the poor standing of the Portuguese at the port from a minor incident in 1552. A Jesuit, Padre Mestre Gaspar, put in at the port, and having preached long and earnestly was astonished to find the inhabitants of the town laughing; they then said that nothing short of a miracle would convert them, and insisted that he raise up a dead man. When this feat proved beyond his powers, he left the port, saving face by declaring to his superiors that he had, by dint of his very faith, put the fear of God into them.[117] It is in the 1560s that references to the port occur with greater frequency, and it is now squarely in the context of the Red Sea trade. In 1564, two Portuguese at Venice, Gaspar and João Ribeiro, wrote to the court at Lisbon, that they had received letters from Cairo dated June 1564, from which they gathered that 18,000 *quintais* pepper, and 3,000 *quintais* of other spices had arrived at Jiddah, 'In ships of Aceh, and also in ships of Bhatkal, in all twenty-four ships which brought these spices, and these Acehnese are those who dominate the commerce'.[118] The relative importance of the two sources was reversed the following year. The letters of the Venetian consul at Cairo in 1565 indicate that the arrivals at Jiddah included eight ships from Bhatkal, besides three from Calicut. In the following year however, there were only three ships from Bhatkal to match the five from Aceh, with the eight vessels bringing 24,000 *cantara* of pepper in all to Jiddah.[119] The role of the Acehnese in this trade

[116] Letter from Ruy Gonçalves de Caminha to D. João da Castro, *ANTT*, Colecção de São Lourenço III, in *CSL*, III, pp. 447–8. The prosperity of the port in the late 1540s is also testified to by the large sums of money sent by Khoja Shams-ud-din Gilani from Cannanore to Bhatkal, doubtless to prosecute trade from there. On this last, see *ANTT*, Gavetas XIII/8–43, published in A. da Silva Rego, ed., *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, Volume III, p. 205.

[117] *Biblioteca da Ajuda*, Lisbon, Códice 49-IV-49, letter dated 1 December 1552, in *D.P.P.*, Volume V, p. 254.

[118] *ANTT*, CC, I/107/9, letter from Gaspar and João Ribeiro at Venice to the King of Portugal, dated 27 August 1564.

[119] *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, Dispacci, Consoli, busta 20, cited in Frederic C. Lane, 'The Mediterranean spice trade: its revival in the sixteenth century', in Lane, *Venice and History*, Baltimore, 1966, pp. 30–1.

is well recognised now, but one cannot say the same for the trade from Bhatkal, in modern day writings.[120]

No such confusion existed in the official mind of the *Estado,* which was most definitely seized of the problem in the mid 1560s. In December 1566, the viceroy Dom Antão de Noronha wrote to the Portuguese monarch that 20 to 25,000 *quintais* of pepper went annually to the Red Sea, while the Portuguese succeeded in sending merely 10 to 12,000 *quintais* to Lisbon. The pepper to the Red Sea partly came from Aceh and the Sunda Straits, but in large measure from Kanara. It was at the latter that he aimed his policies, since, as he declared, 'The settler in Goa can with less trouble and far more easily get pepper in this coast of Bhatkal, which is twenty leagues from here, with Your Highness the master of the seas and of the coast, than can the Turk, who comes from Constantinople, or the Moor from Cairo and from Aleppo'. As a consequence, already in 1565, he had contracted with one Álvaro Mendes, a *casado* settler in Goa, for some Kanara pepper. He declared that there was enough pepper there for at least a large galleon (which would mean over 6,000 *quintais*, the average pepper cargo in the Lisbon-bound galleons of the period). The first substantial instalment of Kanara pepper to be sent to Portugal thereafter was in the galleon *São Rafael* in 1565.[121]

Dom Antão and his successor, Don Luís de Ataíde, did not stop at this, however, and took far more affirmative action. Their action was one of the two reasons why Bhatkal – a major participant in the Red Sea trade in the 1560s – disappears almost completely from the oceanic commerce by 1575. The events of the period were set in motion by a decisive shift in the balance of power in the southern Indian region. After decades of internecine warfare and shifting alliances, the Sultanates of the Deccan succeeded in 1565 in finally confronting the Vijayanagara empire unitedly. The consequences of the resulting defeat of Vijayanagara were perhaps not as epoch-making as was once believed by historians. The Vijayanagara empire did not crumble instantaneously, but its centre of gravity shifted south and east. Some territory to the north was lost to the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda. From our viewpoint, the two most serious

[120] See, for example, Meilink-Roelofsz., *Asian Trade and European Influence*, p. 363, note 140. The author cites Lane as her source, but distorts 'Batticalà' in his account to 'Batticalao', thus creating a confusion between the Indian west coast and a port in Sri Lanka.

[121] Letter from D. Antão de Noronha to the King of Portugal, dated Goa, 17 December 1566, *ANTT*, CC, I/108/15, in *DPP*, Volume X, pp. 158–9.

consequences of the defeat of 1565 were the following: first, the aftermath of the battle saw the city of Vijayanagara being sacked and extensively damaged, especially by Golconda forces; secondly, in the ten years following 1565, the imperial centre of Vijayanagara effectively ceased to be a power as far as the western reaches of the peninsula were concerned, leaving a vacuum that was eventually filled by Ikkeri and Mysore. The Vijayanagara empire survived till the mid seventeenth century, but its focus was now exclusively in the Tamil and Telugu regions. Returning to the first of the two consequences, by 1570 the city of Vijayanagara was – as Cesare Federici noted – a shadow of its former self.[122] The court – now shifted to Penugonda to the south-east – no longer had surrounding it an urban centre of any substantial dimensions; the old capital declined with amazing rapidity and nothing of corresponding dimensions arose to replace it. This fragile character of the great inland centre was transferred in some measure to the port to which it was linked, and this was to prove the undoing of Bhatkal. With Vijayanagara abandoned – or at any rate much reduced in population and prosperity – the inland vent for imports that had served to lift Bhatkal far above the level of other ports in the vicinity no longer existed. Several categories of goods from the Middle East – destined for consumption at the court – were no longer saleable, and the horse trade too lost its vitality. Together with this circumstance, there was the other major contributing factor – the Portuguese intervention on the coast. Taking advantage of the political vaccum on the west coast, resulting from the withdrawal of the Vijayanagara political umbrella, the Portuguese *Estado* in a series of expeditions forcibly occupied and fortified the approaches to three ports on the Kanara coast: Honawar, Basrur and Mangalore. The first of the three to be attacked was Mangalore, where, after a prolonged and bloody action against resistance by the chiefs of Ullal, a fortress was set up in early 1568.[123] In late 1568, Honawar was subjugated, and a small fortress there taken over and renamed *Santa Catarina*. Finally, early in 1569, the viceroy D. Luís de Ataíde attacked and took over a small fort maintained by the merchants of the port town of Basrur, at the mouth of the Kundapur estuary. Thus, in the space of a little over a year, the Portuguese *Estado* had succeeded in straddling Bhatkal, with two fortresses to the south and one to the north. Immediately thereafter,

[122] For Cesare Federici's account, see Pinto, ed., *Viaggi di C. Federici*, pp. 15–22, 'La città di Bezeneger non è distrutta, anzi è con tutte le sue case in piedi, ma è vota, ne gli habita anima viva se non tigri e altre fiere...'

[123] Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década VIII, pp. 125–9.

customs houses were set up by the administration at Basrur and Mangalore, and the former in particular was meant to centralise the trade (both in horses and other commodities) originating from the Persian Gulf. Through Honawar, the Portuguese administration intended to tap the pepper production of Kanara and keep it from flowing on the established nexus between Bhatkal and the Red Sea.[124]

This combination of events – the one purely fortuitous from the viewpoint of the *Estado da Índia*, the other a deliberate act of policy – effectively spelt *finis* for Bhatkal. Linschoten in his account (based largely on information pertinent to the 1570s) does not even deign to mention the port, so unimportant had it become. In 1581, the budget statement of the *Estado* declares, 'In the port of Bhatkal, the King Our Lord had a factor who used to collect the said tribute, and traded with his goods, and collected the tribute from Mirjan, a post that has now not existed for many years'.[125] By the late 1580s, the *Estado* obliged the ruler of Gersoppa to sell them 7–8,000 *quintais* of pepper annually at a contracted price, an increase of 5–6,000 *quintais* over the amount stipulated under an earlier treaty of 1568.[126] In these straitened circumstances, Bhatkal's hour of prosperity was past, and it was only in the seventeenth century – and under the patronage of the Nayakas of Ikkeri – that attempts could be made to resuscitate its fortunes.

The Malabar ports and the Portuguese, 1530–70

If, in the anachronistic terms of a part of the historiography, the Mappilas of Malabar were 'freedom-fighters', and the Kunjalis 'admirals of the Zamorin', it is all too easy – by the same token – to portray the rajas of Cochin as quislings.[127] In 1500, the first Portuguese fleet sailed into Cochin, an action that was prompted by the rapid deterioration of relations between them and the Samudri *rajas* of Calicut. At this time, Cochin was no more than a small town, ruled over by a chieftain, who was subordinate to the Calicut ruler, though chafing under this relationship. In the century and a half

124 *Ibid.*, pp. 276–8.

125 The *orçamento* of 1581 is published in A. Teodoro de Matos, *O Estado da Índia nos Anos de 1581–88*, p. 171.

126 See Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década VIII, pp. 276–7; Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, III, pp. 32–33; Matos, *O Estado da Índia*, p. 169.

127 At any rate, there is no celebration of the history of these kings comparable to K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut, 1938.

during which the Portuguese state played a major role in Cochin – they were expelled by the forces of the Dutch Company only in 1663 – roughly a dozen *rajas* sat the Cochin throne, the greater part of them in the period after 1600. During the sixteenth century, the very longevity of the Cochin *rajas* gave that state a remarkable stability, and there were only four successions in the entire hundred years, in marked contrast to the fifteen Samudris who sat the Calicut throne.[128]

In large measure on account of the catalytic role of the Portuguese in the balance of commercial and political power in Kerala, Cochin grew in importance from the sleepy village of Cabral's time, so that it could in 1582 be described as 'at present the largest and richest city in [Portuguese] India after Goa, in terms of the number of people, the sumptuousness of the edifices, temples and the houses of the natives (who have settled there in large numbers)'.[129] The inevitable element of exaggeration aside, there can be little question that Cochin in 1580 was the dominant seaport on the Malabar coast, having surpassed both Cannanore and Calicut. To a certain extent, as the author of the 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas' cited above affirms, the properity of Cochin could be seen as stemming from its role as the major gathering point for pepper, which was then loaded on board the ships of the *Carreira da Índia* bound for Lisbon. However, with Kanara pepper accounting for an increasing share of these cargoes after the 1560s, this would have been a tenuous foundation on which to build the economic edifice of the port town. Since this side of Cochin's function is relatively well-known anyway, we shall concentrate on the other aspect, namely Cochin as a centre of *casado*, *mestiço* and Asian trade, in brief the aspect known as 'the trade from India to India'.

Portuguese Cochin, or *Cochim de baixo*, lay on a triangular tongue of land, and was distinct from the 'native' settlement, or *Cochim de cima*, where the *rajas* maintained their residence, and which was located upriver from the Portuguese town. The lagoon and river of Cochin made for easy entry and exit, and in most ways the town's location was far more favourable than that of Calicut to the north, or even Bhatkal still further up the coast. The Portuguese enterprise in Asia in the first decade-and-a-half operated from a headquarters in Cochin, and it was only with the acquisition and settlement of Goa by

128 K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *A Short History of Kerala*, Ernakulam, 1966, pp. 205–6; O.K. Nambiar, *The Kunjalis – Admirals of Calicut*, Bombay, 1963, earlier published as *Portuguese Pirates and Indian Seamen*.

129 Cf. Mendes da Luz, ed., 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', pp. 70–1.

Albuquerque that the administration moved there in the second decade of the sixteenth century. Cochin and Goa became the two major centres of the *Estado*'s power and presence, and were in some sense commercial rivals as well. The problem in the case of Cochin was that it had not been acquired outright, by payment or by use of force, by the Portuguese. Hence, the Portuguese *Estado* had no customs house there, and, with the collection of customs revenue forming one of the important objectives of the *Estado*, there was a certain official reluctance to aid and abet the development of navigational lines within Asia emanating from Cochin. We thus see in the first three quarters of the sixteenth century a marked contrast in the attitude of the *Estado* to Cochin, in comparison to Ormuz, Goa or Melaka; whereas shipping to these latter centres was actively encouraged and even compelled by means of the so-called *cartaz-cum-cafila* system, there was no such external impetus given to fostering Cochin's trade. On the other hand, the ships of the *Carreira* had of necessity to put in at Cochin, since the other major imperative of the *Estado* was the provision of pepper cargoes for Europe. In at least some important senses then, the growth of Cochin as a centre of shipping and trade in the period up to 1570 is of unusual interest; first because – unlike Goa, Ormuz or Melaka – it is not already a major centre before the Portuguese acquire it, and secondly because the process is an 'organic' one, rather than the result purely and simply of forcible diversion.

Cochin's trade in the second half of the sixteenth century extended in both directions – east and west. There was the trade to Gujarat and the Indian west coast (north of Goa), principally to Diu, Surat and Chaul. Trade with Gujarat involved the export from Cochin of pepper, ginger, other spices, goods from China and Melaka, coir and coconuts, with the balancing import of opium, raw cotton and textiles, together with some grain. Needless to say, since both pepper and opium were – at least in theory – contraband items for much of the sixteenth century, the trade in them was either with the connivance or outside the cognisance of the *Estado*'s authorities. A less important link was that to the Red Sea, since the trade there from Malabar was dominated by shipping from Calicut and Cannanore, even in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, in the closing years of the sixteenth century, there is the odd instance of the *rajas* of Cochin themselves sending ships to Jiddah, under cover of a *cartaz* from the Portuguese viceroy.[130] Important though

[130] *HAG*, Monções do Reino, 6A [1604–06], fls. 67–7v.

the western arms of the trade were, there can be little doubt that the eastern links of Cochin – those to Coromandel, to Melaka, to Macau and Manila, and above all to the ports of Bengal – were what dominated the trade of this port. The trade to the Coromandel ports was coastal, and involved the import of textiles and rice, with the corresponding export of timber, pepper, areca and other spices. The trade to Melaka seems essentially to have been a re-export trade, as was that to Macau. It was customary for the ships on the long voyages from Goa to Macau to put in at Cochin on both the outward and return voyages, to take in or to offload goods belonging to the *casados* at Cochin. Thus, access to the goods of China and the Archipelago on the one hand, and to the textiles of Gujarat on the other, allowed Cochin to perform an entrepôt role.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, there are in addition indications of trade links between Cochin and the ports of Pegu, the Malay peninsula and Sumatra. The Crown commercial voyages, carried on in the Portuguese monarch's *naus*, sometimes left from Cochin. We may note for example that the itinerary of António Correa in the period May 1519 to January 1521 was Cochin–Pasai–Melaka – Pasai – Martaban – Pasai – Melaka – Pasai – Cochin. On his departure from Cochin in 1519, Correa who was aboard the Crown ship *Santiago Brandoa* – was accompanied as far as Melaka by two other ships, one a caravel *Santiago*, and the other a brigantine *Santa Barbara.*[131] The Captain's ship carried some 21,500 pieces of Gujarati textiles, while the other ships carried in addition cargoes of cumin. While Correa's own *nau* made the rather complex voyage mentioned above, trading from port to port, the other two made a rather more standard voyage in the period, Cochin–Melaka–Cochin, comparable in routineness to the Pulicat voyage discussed in a preceding section, or the Bhatkal-Ormuz route mentioned somewhat earlier in this discussion. We have evidence of the grant of several captaincies of these voyages in the 1520s and early 1530s, such as one made in March 1531 by D. João III to one Tristão de Sousa, a *fidalgo* of the royal household, of 'the captaincy of the trading carrack that

[131] The activities of António Correa are documented for example in *ANTT*, Núcleo Antigo, No. 807, etc. The entire corpus of documentation dealing with this voyage is available in Luís Filipe Thomaz, *A Viagem de António Correa a Pegu em 1519*; see also Geneviève Bouchon, 'Les prémiers voyages Portugais à Passai et à Pegou'. The frequent resort to Pasai in Correa's voyage reflects the importance of this centre for a brief period in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century. It was commonly used as a source of pepper as well as of rice, to supply a ship on the voyage to Martaban.

goes from Cochin to Melaka, for a period of three years'.[132] In a somewhat later instance, we find the ship sent on the annual Pegu voyage [*Carreira de Pegu*] returning to Cochin at the end of a – on this particular instance unsuccessful – voyage.[133] However, the gradual dismantling of links between the western Indian Ocean and the ports of the Bay of Bengal littoral, a process that accompanies the course of the sixteenth century, manifests itself eventually in the decline – late in that century – of direct trade between Cochin and Martaban, Mergui or the 'tin ports' of the Malay peninsula. Crucially too, the system of concessions discussed at some length in earlier sections of the chapter did not include a single one originating from Cochin.[134] Cochin's trade in the latter half of the sixteenth century was one then that essentially exploited the routes outside of the concession system: the trade to Bengal, Orissa and Coromandel, that to Ceylon, the western Indian Ocean routes mentioned earlier and the trade to Melaka. Direct participation in the China trade in the second half of the sixteenth century by *casados* resident at Cochin was further reinforced in the last fifteen years of the century, after a customs house reform at Cochin in 1585.

A crucial aspect of Cochin's trade was its link with Bengal, and this has somewhat surprisingly been neglected in the literature. The trade to Satgaon (and in the last two decades of the sixteenth century Hughli), as well as that to Chittagong and Dianga occupied a major place in the *casado* trade from Cochin. As early as 1526, we may note that Cochin was an accepted outlet for the textiles produced in Bengal.[135] In the course of the sixteenth century, with Bengal textiles coming to form a fair share of the liberty-chest cargoes on the ships of the *Carreira da Índia*, this trade was of growing importance. In the last two decades of the sixteenth century, textiles accounted for upwards of 10 per cent of the cargo value on the Lisbon-bound Indiamen; if the dominant proportion of these were Gujarat textiles, the *khasas*, *malmals* and silks of Bengal accounted for a fair share too, with

[132] *ANTT*, Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 9, fl. 18, grant dated 15 March 1531; see also Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 30, fl. 75v, grant to Gaspar de Azevedo.

[133] *ANTT*, CC, I/83/90, letter from Jorge Cabral at Cochin to the King of Portugal, dated 21 February 1550.

[134] See Mendes da Luz, ed., 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', together with A. Teodoro de Matos, *O Estado da Índia 1581–88*, and Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz, 'Les Portugais dans les mers do l'Archipel au XVIe siècle', n. 3.

[135] *ANTT*, Núcleo Antigo, No. 808, 'Livro da Receita e Despesa de Manuel da Gama, Feitor e Capitam da Costa do Coromandel, Anno de 1526', fls. 5–6v, section entitled 'Vemda que ffiz da roupa...que tomou Manoel da Gama sinalada de veador da ffzda nesta praça de Cochim'.

Coromandel textiles lagging behind those of the other two producing areas.[136] António Bocarro, writing in the 1630s, when the trade to Bengal from Cochin had already fallen off, estimated its total value in the heyday of the link at 400,000 *xerafins*, which would account for perhaps even half of the total trade from Cochin.[137] The exports to Bengal from Cochin included the minor 'drugs' and spices, but the trade was quite clearly dominated by the export of pepper. Despite Lisbon's statutory ban on all private movement of pepper in Asian waters, the viceroys had begun as early as the 1520s to license limited movements of pepper.[138]

By the 1540s, the flourishing pepper export from Cochin to Bengal was an acknowledged fact, some of the shippers taking the trouble of obtaining a viceregal licence and others not even that. It is not easy to estimate the total extent of this trade, but it was clearly sufficient to cause the official mind of the *Estado* to be exercised by the question. In a series of opinions sought from old India hands in the 1540s, diverging opinions were expressed on whether the export of pepper to the Bay of Bengal area – and more particularly to Bengal itself – should be permitted, and if the Crown itself should sell the commodity there. The advantage of doing this, as stated by Julião Fernandes (one of those consulted) was the enormous profit that Malabar pepper would yield in Bengal, since it was much cheaper than that from Aceh and Sunda, which was sold there by Asian merchants.[139] As against this financial gain, both Fernandes and Jorge Cabral – another of those whose opinion was sought – argued that the diversion of pepper to the Bay of Bengal would raise pepper prices in Cochin, make pepper for the cargoes of the Lisbon-bound carracks more difficult of access, and not least of all encourage the diversion of the commodity to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.[140]

136 See Niels Steensgaard, 'The return cargoes of the *Carreira da India* in the sixteenth century', in T.R. de Souza, ed., *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions*, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 22–3; Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630–1720*, pp. 183–6; *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, Caixa 3, Document 152; Caixa 4, Document 50.

137 António Bocarro, 'Livro das plantas', in Bragança Pereira, ed., *Arquivo Português Oriental*, Tomo IV, Volume II, Parte I, p. 353.

138 Witness the movement of pepper to Ormuz as early as 1523; Correia, *Lendas*, Tomo II, p. 742.

139 The opinions tendered by Julião Fernandes and Jorge Cabral were among several solicited from old India hands in the period; the two are to be found respectively in *ANTT*, CC, I/76/8 and CC, I/77/26, dated 19 January 1545 and 12 November 1545.

140 Thus, the view of Bernaldo de Fonseca, cited in n. 115, *supra*, must be seen in its more general context, which is of a debate in official circles during the viceroyalty of D. João de Castro.

Thus, on balance, both of them advocated the rejection of the proposal. But other counsel prevailed, so that the late 1540s saw a rash of licensing under protection of which pepper was transported from Cochin to Bengal. These licences usually carried a stipulation on the amount of pepper that could be carried if the grantee was a private individual, and in addition Crown vessels toò carried the 'contraband' item. The viceroy D. João de Castro himself wrote in 1546, 'On the fourth of April, I sent D. Bernardo de Souza to Bengal, to Porto Grande (Chittagong) with pepper on account of the Queen, Our Lady'.[141] The extensive papers from the same viceroyalty show that the nay-sayers were indeed right; once licences began to be given, quantitative restrictions as well as control over destination proved difficult to enforce. A shipper licensed to carry ninety sacks of pepper might well stow twice that amount, and carry it not to Bengal but to a wholly different destination. Others, encouraged by the difficulty in enforcement, would not even bother to take a viceregal licence before embarking on such a venture. The events surrounding the difficult period of the captaincy of Henrique de Sousa Chichorro at Cochin in the 1540s centred in essence on this problem, of stemming the flow of pepper to Bengal given the ambience created by the licence system.[142]

Later legislation, in the early 1570s for example, explicitly banned this sort of licensed trade in pepper within Asia. From Bocarro's later account, one can conclude though that such strictures as were passed in Lisbon and later Valladolid remained more or less dead letters where Asian waters were concerned. The trade in pepper from Cochin to Bengal continued into the early seventeenth century – as Bocarro explicitly avers.[143] The dimensions of this problem was also one of the factors that prompted the move in the 1580s to supervise customs collection at Cochin, until then in the hands of the Cochin *raja*. This change and its implications, will form one of the themes of the next chapter.

For the moment then, we may content ourselves by noting that, by the 1570s, Cochin had become a substantial centre of trade, certainly of greater importance than Cannanore, and very probably

[141] Elanie Sanceau, ed., *Cartas de D. João de Castro*, Lisbon, 1954, p. 236, letter dated 16 December 1546.

[142] For details of these events, see Sanceau, ed., *CSL*, Volume III, pp. 80, 312, 501, 505, *passim*. also R.O.W. Goertz, 'The Portuguese in Cochin in the mid-sixteenth century', *Indica*, Volume XXIII, 1986, pp. 63–78.

[143] Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Part I, pp. 353–4, '...o que levão he pimenta por mais que se lhe tolhe'.

even of greater significance than Calicut. This growth is evident from the documents related to trade, but also emerges from the changing status of Cochin in the structure of the *Estado da Índia.* As early as 1538, D. João III had created Portuguese Cochin a 'City' in the formal juridical sense, to be administered not by a Captain alone but by a Council of Aldermen, elected from amongst the citizens. This privilege had been confirmed by the Governor Martim Afonso de Sousa in 1542 and by successive viceroys and governors since.[144] At the same time, the Kings of Portugal had explicitly renounced all rights to customs duties collected at Cochin, these remaining with the local ruler. This made for a rather awkward set of rules under which natives of Cochin and the *casados* settled there were permitted to put in direct at Cochin, paying duties there, while all other goods destined for Cochin had, on doubling Cape Comorin to go *first* to Goa, pay duties there, and only then come to Cochin. Since lower rates prevailed at Cochin, other traders entered into side-deals with Cochin's *casados,* who would bring the goods through the customs house claiming ownership. On other occasions, shippers claimed that as the monsoon was due, it was dangerous to sail further up the coast than Cochin, using this as a justification for not putting into Goa.[145] This particular privilege, taken together with the geographical position of Cochin – which enabled it at one and the same time to tap the trade from the west coast of India to Melaka and China, from Bengal to the western Indian Ocean, and from Portuguese India to Lisbon – was the key to its growing importance.

Conclusion

Between 1500 and about 1570, the networks of long-distance seaborne trade involving southern India underwent considerable changes. Yet these were not always the changes that one might have expected, nor were they motivated by simple, unitary, causes. If one surveys the period, it emerges that the Portuguese – both as a state, the *Estado da Índia Oriental,* and as private traders (in particular *casados*) – were a significant element in the changes that came about. However, the Portuguese did not succeed in gaining control over all of long-distance seaborne trade, or even the greater part thereof. The

144 For details, see *Biblioteca da Ajuda*, Lisbon, Códice 51-VII-14, a volume entitled 'Privilégios da Cidade de Cochim'.

145 *BNL*, Fundo Geral, Códice 2702, fls. 3–3v, reproduced in V.M. Godinho, *Les Finances de l'État Portugais des Indes Orientales (1517–1635),* Paris 1982, pp. 138–39.

first four decades of the sixteenth century see the Iberian impact taking a very limited form, as the Portuguese exploit existent trade routes, and do not have a significant diversionary effect on trade, save perhaps to the Middle East. It is in mid century that things begin to change, and this is the phenomenon that we have here termed the 'second wind'. In part, these changes are brought about on account of a complex and changing relationship between the desires (and claims) of the *individuals* involved in holding together the structure of *Ásia Portuguesa,* and the *Estado da Índia*; an important element in this process is the concession system. However, this system is of far greater significance in the Bay of Bengal and the Indonesian archipelago than in the western Indian Ocean, and the period when it comes into operation is also the period when private Portuguese turn increasingly to these areas east of Cape Comorin to seek their mercantile fortunes.

However, if one considers the major changes of the period – the decline of Pulicat, the gradual rise of São Tomé and Nagapattinam on the one hand, and (as we shall see in the next chapter) the more dramatic florescence of Masulipatnam on the other, on the south-west coast the reorientations involving Bhatkal, Cochin and Calicut – these are equally related to significant events in the interior. It is impossible to understand the rapid, dramatic, and near simultaneous decline of Bhatkal and Pulicat without looking to reorientations in internal trade, associated with the decline and rapid depopulation of Vijayanagara. Equally, the rise of Masulipatnam which we shall discuss in detail in the next chapter is intimately related to the consolidation of Golconda in the late 1560s and 1570s.

This said, it must be noted that the first three-quarters of the sixteenth century do not appear to be a period of substantial general expansion in trade or commercial networks. The changes that we have discussed occur in a near-static context, and there are relatively few commercial lines (that from Malabar to Bengal would appear to be one of them) which show evidence of rapid expansion. Even the growth of trade to Europe via the Cape route was achieved at the cost – initially – of a decline in trade to Europe via alternative routes. It may be best then to regard this period of three-quarters of a century as a prelude to the phase of great expansion, which commences in the last third, or quarter, of the sixteenth century, and continues well into the seventeenth century.

4

Overseas trade, 1570–1650: expansion and realignment

The last quarter of the sixteenth century marks the beginning of a substantial process, simultaneously of realignment and expansion, in the networks of overseas commerce involving the ports of southern India. In part, this is reflected in the rise of certain ports and the decline of others, for, as we have seen in the previous chapter, both Bhatkal and Pulicat – earlier the most substantial trading centres by far on the west and east coast respectively – now enter into decadence. These ports are not replaced by other neighbouring centres in a straightforward fashion; instead, one observes in the case of Pulicat a complex relationship with the rise of the north Coromandel port of Masulipatnam, and in the case of Bhatkal, a process of dispersion of trade to smaller centres along the west coast. The major centre of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century in south-western India is Cochin, and we shall be at some pains in this chapter to trace the fortunes of this port. Our discussion must commence however with the eastern seaboard of south India, and in particular with a consideration of the fortunes of the two ports that dominate its trade in the decades from 1570 to 1650, namely Masulipatnam to the north, and Nagapattinam far to the south.

The Bay of Bengal, 1570–1600: introduction

It has already been suggested that the major reorientations which occurred in Coromandel's trade in the sixteenth century took place in the latter half, being linked to a set of changes we have associated with the 'second wind' of Portuguese impact. The conjuncture of events that brought about this change – and which took the form of the crystallisation of a locus of networks in the Bay of Bengal – was however far more complex. In terms of concrete events, the change took the form of the decline of Pulicat, the rise of Masulipatnam, and the growth within the Bay of Bengal of a trading system which involved ports that were outside the ambit of Portuguese official control. A convenient starting point for this discussion is the political change in inland south India in the 1560s.

With the decline in the late fifteenth century of the Bahmani Sultanate, the northern Deccan came to be controlled by five successor states: Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Berar and Bidar. The combined resources of the first three of these states (the most powerful of the five) were, it is apparent, far more substantial than that of the Sultanate they succeeded. In the struggle between the kingdom of Vijayanagara and the Bahmani Sultanate, which had continued intermittently from the mid fourteenth to the late fifteenth century, the former usually held the edge. In the early sixteenth century, with the successor Sultanates in disarray and yet to consolidate, Vijayanagara – under Krishna Deva Raya – had been able to make substantial territorial gains to the north. In this, the latter kingdom was aided by the internecine strife that had continued among the Deccan kingdoms, and particularly by its alliance with the Qutb Shahs against the rulers of Bijapur. In the 1560s, however, the Sultanates brought their combined military weight to bear for the first time on Vijayanagara. The result was a decisive defeat incurred by the latter at the battle of Talikota in January 1565.[1] This battle did not result, it is true, in very substantial territorial losses – though there were some – for Vijayanagara. Its important consequences were two-fold: it accelerated the process of decentralisation and the formation of regional breakaway kingdoms already inherent in the state structure of Vijayanagara, (thus, it is important to remember that Vijayanagara – like the Mughal empire – was destroyed by a process and not by an event); secondly, it led to the sack of the imperial city by hostile, primarily Golconda, forces.[2]

It has earlier been mentioned that Pulicat maintained a direct road link with the imperial capital city. This latter, a formidable centre of consumption, with a population estimated at upwards of 300,000 in the early sixteenth century, and extremely large by pre-modern standards, was thus one crucial factor in shoring up Pulicat's pre-eminent position in Coromandel trade. The sack of Vijayanagara city

[1] On the effects of this battle, see *inter alia* Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire: Vijayanagara*, reprint New Delhi, 1962, pp. 182–205 for an old-fashioned but still interesting account. For more detailed sources, see *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, ed. K.A.N. Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya, Volume, III, pp. 198–249.

[2] The description by Cesare Federici in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, London 1625, Volume II, p. 1703, states 'The cities of Bezeneger is not altogether destroyed, yet the houses stand still, but emptie, and there is dwelling in them nothing as it reported but Tygres and other wile beasts', for the original of which see Chapter 3, note 122. There is of course the problem of whether this referred to the city and all its suburbs; some would suggest that Anegondi, across the river from the main city, was not too extensively damaged.

in 1565, followed by the move of the imperial court first to the relatively secure fort of Penugonda to the south-east, and eventually to the twin court complex of Chandragiri-Velur meant a rapid depopulation of the capital city. Observers in the late 1560s described the city as much reduced, with large sections abandoned and destroyed. There was no centre of corresponding dimensions which emerged, and the new court town was a pale shadow of the old. It was argued in the last chapter that the decline of the great inland consumption centre was the primary cause of the equally rapid decline of two port towns with which Vijayanagara was intimately linked: Bhatkal on the west coast, and Pulicat on the east. However, there was another factor that contributed to Pulicat's decline – the system of concessions adopted by the Portuguese Crown.

The clearest exposition we have of this system and its functioning comes to us from the early 1580s, by which time it had been in operation already for more than a decade, and even two decades in the case of some concession voyages.[3] The concessions relating to Coromandel that were routinely granted at the time (*c.* 1580) were as shown in Table 4.1, and all of these were *monopoly* concessions rather than ones where the grantee was the Captain-Major of a private trading fleet. In addition, there were concessions for voyages – probably beginning from Nagapattinam – Peddapalli in the Krishna delta, to Pipli, Satgaon and Chittagong. In the case of the six voyages listed initially, we have already noted that the concession implied a *total* monopoly; this is not as clear in the case of the others. The logic of this imposition is apparent, since after all the concession holder made the voyage at his own expense, and in his own shipping. Thus, the value of the voyage which we have cited above represented to the concession holder the value of his position as monopolist – or, in certain cases, the value of the privilege he received as *provedor dos defuntos* and Captain-Major.

The effect of such a piece of monopolistic legislation on Asian shipping depends crucially on one factor: the enforceability of the monopoly. The Portuguese Crown could declare that each year only its authorised concession holder could navigate on a certain route, but enforceability on the ground (or in this case, in the water) was a wholly different issue. In certain cases such as the route to Melaka,

[3] The first grant that I have been able to locate of a concession from São Tomé to Melaka (as distinct from grants of the post of factor of the *nau del-Rei*) is dated 1565, but it would only have come into effect a few years later. For this grant, see J.H. da Cunha Rivara, ed., *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental* (APO), Fascículo V (2), Document 542, pp. 592–3.

Table 4.1. *Concession values, c. 1580*

Concession voyage	Value (in cruzados)	
São Tomé to Melaka	6,000	
São Tomé to Pegu	4–8,000	
Nagapattinam to Martaban	1,000	
Nagapattinam to Mergui	1,000	
Nagapattinam to Ujangselang	1,000	(or less)
Nagapattinam to Kedah	1,000	(or less)

the enforceability could be thought to be complete not merely in theory but in practice, since the port of destination was in Portuguese hands. In other cases, the situation differed. If one examines the documentation of the period, one finds listed in most cases the value of a concession in monetary terms to its recepient.[4] This value, I would argue, represents an estimate of the monopoly rent – the gains to the holder from being the sole person to make the voyage, as opposed to one among many. This monopoly rent was in each case actually a product of two terms: (i) the 'pure' monopoly rent, which is to say the monopoly rent in the event that the monopoly was fully enforceable, (ii) the degree of monopoly, a number between zero and one, which would indicate the effectiveness of enforcement. In several cases, the documents of the period indicate to us that the value of a concession was low, and this not because the voyage was not a profitable one, or because the state of commerce was depressed, but because the degree of monopoly was close to zero. In the early 1580s, one finds this to be the case with the voyages to the tin ports of Malaysia for instance.[5]

The rise of Masulipatnam, 1570–1600

The rapid decline of Pulicat in the decade 1565 to 1575 serves to emphasise the general point made in an earlier chapter: the fragility of port cities, and their proneness to change on account of changed political circumstances in their hinterland. Masulipatnam's rise in the period 1570 to 1600 represents, to a certain extent, the reverse side of

[4] The list of values of the voyages is gleaned from F.P. Mendes da Luz, ed., 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas'; for a general table of such values, see Luís Filipe Thomaz, 'Les Portugais dans les mers de l'Archipel au XVIe siècle', pp. 122–3. The concessions created after 1581, such as that from Coromandel to Trang, have been excluded here.

[5] 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', pp. 118–22.

the same coin. It is however necessary to see the growth the Masulipatnam in a more global context, that of the Bay of Bengal system. To begin with, though, a brief note on the history of the port up to 1570 may be useful.

In the early sixteenth century, there is no evidence of direct 'high seas' trade carried on from Masulipatnam.[6] The history of the port in earlier centuries is also shrouded in some mystery, though available evidence mentions it as a settlement founded by 'Arab' traders in the fourteenth century, and occupied by the Bahmani Sultans late in the fifteenth century.[7] The area where the port lay – between the mouths of the Krishna and Godavari – continued until the mid sixteenth century to be on the frontier between three political entities: the Vijayanagara empire, the Bahmani kingdom's successor – the Golconda Sultanate –, and the Gajapati kingdom of Orissa, passing from one to the other with alarming frequency. The first mention of the port in the Portuguese records occurs in the 1540s. It is on the one hand mentioned in correspondence between São Tomé and Goa as a place that shelters fugitive and renegade Portuguese, while on the other hand, the Portuguese chronicler Barros, in the close of the 1540s mentions it as a source of white and painted textiles 'which come from there and have the same name'.[8] This reference is particularly useful in view of the absence of any mention in the accounts of Pires and Barbosa, and is only confirmed by the bill of lading of the *nau del-Rei* (dating from about 1550) that we have noted in an earlier chapter.[9] It seems safe to conclude from

[6] The discussion in D.F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Volume I, p. 411, mentions that the Portuguese were familiar with the existence of the Godavari and Krishna delta ports. This is confirmed by an examination of the maps of the 1530s and 1540s. Of direct high seas trade, there is no evidence from the first half of the sixteenth century. Perhaps the only piece of evidence that could be construed to indicate that Masulipatnam was an active sea port in about 1500 is a Chinese rutter (or pilot) which mentions navigation between Sha-li-patan and Lamri (or Aceh Head). For this see J.V. Mills, 'Chinese Navigation in Insulinde about 1500 A.D.', *Archipel* (18), 1979, pp. 69–93, especially p. 82. There are however doubts as to whether the information in these rutters in fact pertains to *circa* 1500 or is in part of a later date (private communication from Pierre-Yves Manguin).

[7] The *Tuzak-i-Walajahi*, cited in Shah Manzur Alam, 'Masulipatam – a metropolitan port in the seventeenth century', *Islamic Culture*, Volume XXXIII (1), 1985, pp. 169–70.

[8] João de Barros, *Da Ásia*, Década I, Parte 2, pp. 293–4, 'O rio entra o Golfo de Bengala per duas bocas entre 16 e 17 graos da danda do Norte, onde estão duas cidades, Guadavarij (*sic*) e Masulapatão, nas quais se fazem uma grande contia de roupas de algodão, que nascem dalí e tem o mesmo nome'. Also see the letters from Miguel Ferreira to D. João de Castro, in *CSL*, III, pp. 64, 70, and another reference on p. 477 of the same volume.

[9] Adelino de Almeida Calado, ed.,'Livro que Trata das Coisas da Índia e do Japão', p. 41.

the tenor of these references that as late as the mid sixteenth century, Masulipatnam was no more than a centre which supplied textiles to other ports on the coastal network, so that they might be shipped thence on 'high seas' routes.

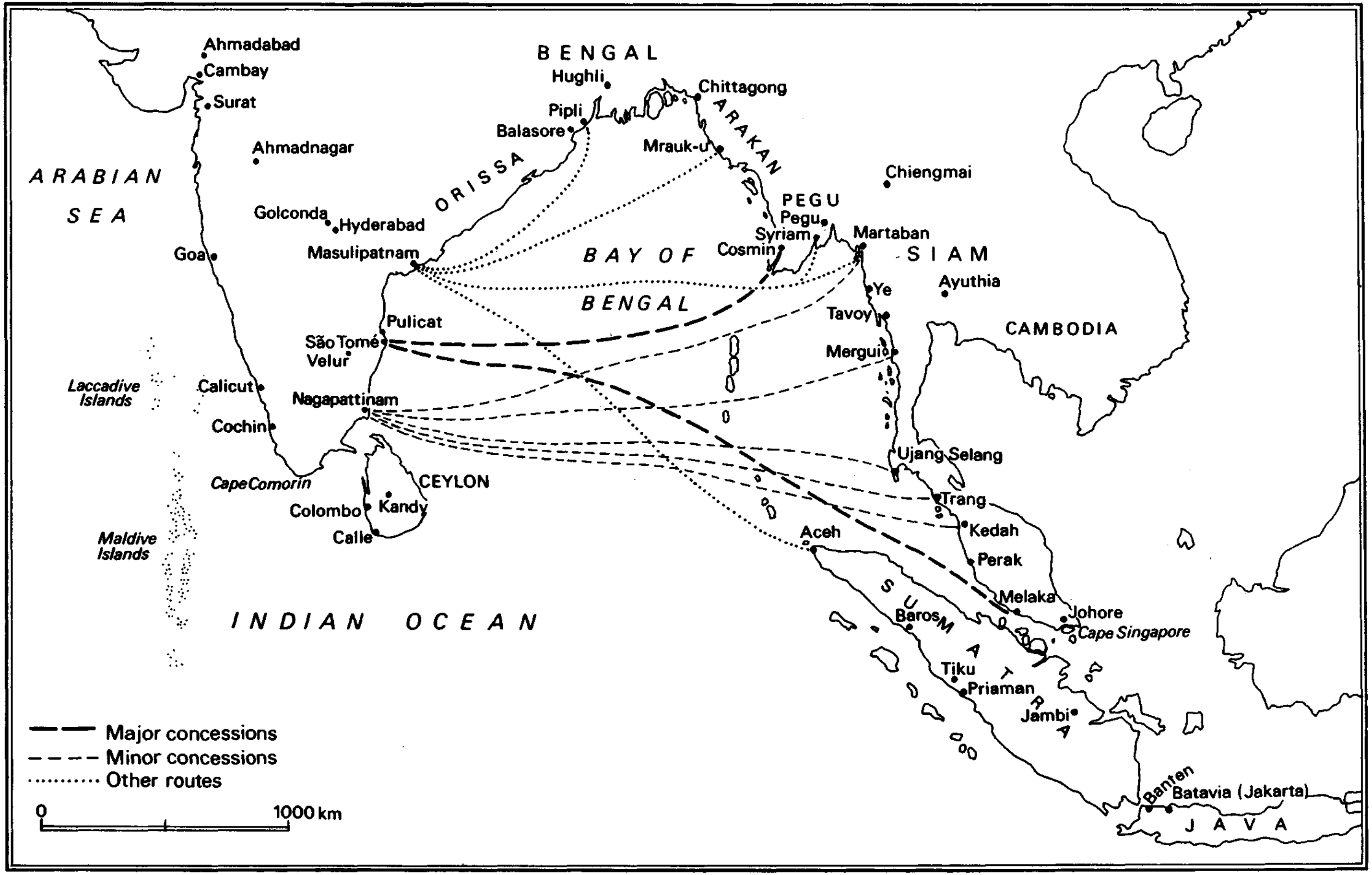
In the early 1560s the forceful fourth Sultan of Golconda, Ibrahim Qutb Shah (1550–1580) brought the area where the port was located under his administration. A few years later, with the sack of Vijayanagara city, an enormous tribute was transferred to his capital city of Golconda, already in the process of transforming itself from a provincial fortress town (as it was under the Bahmanis) to a major centre of population and consumption. In the reign of this Sultan, as in that of his contemporary and namesake in Bijapur, Ibrahim Adil Shah, both Deccan Sultanates acquired stable, Persianised polities, with both Sultans and elites showing interest in the development of seaborne trade.[10] It is apparent that the 1560s saw the development of close links between Golconda and Masulipatnam, and these links were to persist over more than a century and a quarter, a period during which the port became the principal commercial centre in the Bay of Bengal.

The rapid rise of Masulipatnam from the late 1560s on is clearly visible from the Portuguese documents of the period. The regulations governing the Goa customs house in the 1560s make specific mention of textiles from Masulipatnam and the duties to be charged on them;[11] an anonymous account from 1568 suggests that the Portuguese captain of Manar should collect tributes from ports on Coromandel, specifically stressing Masulipatnam as a potential tribute payer;[12] there are other references as well from the 1570s, which will be mentioned ahead. Almost all of these stress what appears to be the salient characteristic of Masulipatnam's trade, an aspect that has for some reason consistently been ignored in the literature; Masulipatnam was seen by the Portuguese as part of an *anti-Portuguese* network of trade. It should of course be clarified that here 'anti-Portuguese' really means 'anti-*Estado da Índia*', as there

[10] J.F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, pp. 10–11; also Richard M. Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur 1300–1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India*, Princeton, 1978, pp. 83–106. For the policy of the Sultans of Bijapur in respect of Dabhol, see the agreement between the Adil Shahs and the *Estado da Índia* dated 30 May 1575 in Cunha Rivara, ed., *APO*, Fascículo V (2), Document 742, pp. 827–8.

[11] *BNL*, Fundo Geral, Códice 2702, fl. 4, dated 21 September 1567; also see V.M. Godinho, *Les Finances de l'État Portugais des Indes Orientales (1517–1635)*, p. 139.

[12] José Wicki, ed., 'Duas Relações sobre a situação da Índia Portuguesa nos anos de 1568 e 1569', *Studia*, No. 8, July 1961, p. 148.



Map 6 The Bay of Bengal: ports and routes, 1580–1600

were numerous Portuguese in Asia (and even in Masulipatnam) who consciously distanced themselves from Portuguese officialdom in the east, and had truck with the 'inimigos do Estado'.[13] Within the Bay of Bengal in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, there were numerous littoral ports, states and polities that were either opposed to or at least anxious to preserve a distance from Goa. It was only natural that trading links among these should have come up, to the exclusion of Portuguese 'official' lines.

Implicit in our formulation has been the idea that Masulipatnam and Golconda numbered among such anti-Portuguese elements; there is, in fact, overwhelming evidence to support this contention, and Masulipatnam's principal trading partners in the phase of its rise are themselves evidence of this fact. The trade from Masulipatnam in the 1570s and 1580s was, first, to Aceh, in the second place to the Malay peninsula ports, thirdly to Pegu, and fourthly to Arakan. In addition there were strong links, by way of coastal navigation, to Pipli in Orissa.[14] If we are to understand the development of the port's links however, we must begin by addressing the question of the development of other ports and states on the Bay's littoral, principally Aceh, Pegu and Arakan.

It has been customary to study the rise of the north Sumatran Sultanate of Aceh in the sixteenth century in terms of the spread of its political and cultural influence in the Indonesian Archipelago (particularly as a centre for the diffusion of Islam), or from the viewpoint of the effects of the rise of Aceh on the pepper and spice trade with the Red Sea.[15] With this perspective, it is natural enough to begin with the argument that the capture of Melaka by the Portuguese led to the flight of Muslim merchants from there, and that these traders

[13] Cf. G. Bouchon and L.F. Thomaz, eds., *Voyage dans les deltas du Gange et de l'Irraouaddy*, Paris, 1988.

[14] On this, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1059, fls. 66v–67; also Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, pp. 34–7.

[15] On Aceh in the sixteenth century, see C.R. Boxer, 'Portuguese reactions to the revival of the Red Sea spice trade and the rise of Atjeh', pp. 415–28; Anthony Reid, 'Trade and the problem of royal power in Aceh: Three stages, c. 1550–1700', in A. Reid and L. Castles, eds., *Pre-Colonial State Systems in South-East Asia*, Monographs of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 6, Kuala Lampur, 1975. On Aceh in the sixteenth century, other useful references include Arun K. Dasgupta, 'Acheh in Indonesian tràde and politics, 1600–1641', and on the early sixteenth century Denys Lombard, *Le Sultanat d'Atjéh au temps d'Iskandar Muda, 1607–1636*, Paris, 1967. For a recent attempt to trace links between Aceh and the Bay of Bengal in the sixteenth century (through the trade in rice and slaves) see Takeshi Ito, 'A note on some aspects of the trade of Aceh in the 17th Century', *Nampo-Bunka* (Tenri Bulletin of South Asian Studies), No. 9, November 1982, pp. 33–60.

initially congregated at the north-east Sumatran ports of Pasai and Pidir, and later – from the 1520s on – increasingly found their way to Aceh, or more precisely Kutaraja, the Bandar Aceh Dar-us-Salaam. This port has hence been characterised, ever since B.J. Schrieke's work, as a sort of anti-Melaka. But it is here that the Portuguese chroniclers lead us astray with their endless accounts of the sieges of Melaka by Acehnese forces, and the vision of Aceh as being – in a negative sense – a Portuguese creation. There were in fact two aspects to Aceh's rise to prominence as an entrepôt. One was its expansion along the length of Sumatra, the capture and control of much of the pepper producing area of the Sumatran west coast, and its consequent growth as a centre of the pepper trade with the western Indian Ocean. The other was its more general entrepôt function, placed as it was in the 'funnel' region, the junction of the Bay of Bengal, the western Indian Ocean, and the Archipelago. In this more general sense, its position may indeed be seen as parallel to that of Melaka in Asian commerce.

When we turn to the seventeenth century, a period when links between Aceh and the western Indian Ocean were weakened (at least in the first half of the century), the multiple functions of Bandar Aceh emerge with great clarity.[16] In the sixteenth century though, Aceh's place in the Bay of Bengal has been systematically ignored, leading to a somewhat distorted view of its commercial development. In fact, Bengal, Pegu, and the Coromandel ports (including Nagapattinam, which supplied Aceh with rice) all maintained a substantial commercial nexus with Aceh from the last quarter of the sixteenth century onwards. The link between Masulipatnam and Aceh was particularly strong. The earliest evidence of this comes from 1572, when we are informed by a Portuguese chronicler of the existence of an anti-Portuguese league, involving *inter alia* the Sultans of Bijapur, Golconda and Aceh. Acehnese forces laid siege to Melaka several times in this period, and, in one of these sieges, the chronicler Jorge de Lemos tells us that the Sultan 'set sail with a fleet well-supplied and munitioned by Cota Maluco [i.e. the Qutb-ul-mulk, Sultan of Golconda], one of the league, since he himself had no Portuguese fortress near his lands which he could attack'.[17] Some-

[16] The decline of trade from Aceh to the western Indian Ocean in the early seventeenth century is referred to, for example, in Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, 1700–1750,* Wiesbaden, 1979, pp. 4–6. This is to some extent at least open to question, on account of conflicting evidence, e.g., *AR,* OB, VOC, 1166, fls. 797–806.

[17] Jorge de Lemos, *História dos Cercos de Malaca*, facsimile edition, Lisbon, 1982, p. 6v.

what later, in 1581, an anonymous Portuguese adviser to the King wrote about Masulipatnam, 'This is a port of the Cota Maluco, in which there is great trade with diverse parts, principally with Aceh, which they supply from here with textiles, munitions, and arms, and with many other things of importance'.[18] Once again, in the same year of 1581, one finds mention in the Portuguese records of two great ships from Aceh reported as riding at anchor in Masulipatnam road, preparatory to being loaded with textiles, iron, steel and munitions.[19]

By trading with Aceh, Masulipatnam quite clearly identified itself as part of an anti-Portuguese or at least non-Portuguese network of high seas trade. The situation with regard to Pegu was only slightly more ambiguous. When the Portuguese *Estado* initiated links with the Irrawaddy delta ports around 1512–13, the area was under the control of the Mon rulers based at Pegu.[20] The succeeding twenty years were politically eventful for the region, and by 1531 the lower and middle Irrawaddy valley had been united for the first time in centuries under the aegis of a single political entity. The rulers of the newly ascendant Taung-ngu dynasty were, as recent studies of the region argue, not only conscious of the importance of the littoral for domestic politics, but of the significance of maritime trade itself. First under Tabin-shwei-hti (1531–50), and later under Bayin-naung (1551–81), the Burmese kingdom expanded rapidly, and equally rapidly adopted a policy that was overtly hostile to the Portuguese *Estado*.[21] By the late 1540s, captains of the Portuguese Crown's shipping on the *Carreira de Pegu* were complaining of the conditions under which they were required to trade at Burmese ports, and of the 'insolence' of the King.[22] Bayin-naung himself, rather in the manner

[18] 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', pp. 123–4.

[19] Diogo do Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década Décima, parte 1, Chapter 3, pp. 14–15.

[20] On the transition from Mon rule to that of the Taung-ngu (or Toungoo) dynasty in lower Burma, see Victor B. Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest, c. 1580–1760*, Princeton, 1984, pp. 22–5.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 25–52; also his earlier paper 'Europeans, trade and the unification of Burma, c. 1540–1620', *Oriens Extremus*, Volume XXIXVI (2) 1980, pp. 203–26. Lieberman's study is however seriously limited by his failure to consult primary material in Portuguese; thus, he fails to emphasise adequately the point that the bulk of commerce from lower Burmese ports – Bassein or Cosmin, Tavoy, Ye, Martaban, and later Siriam – was directed at other Bay littoral regions and not at the western Indian Ocean. Besides, his view of the role played by the Portuguese in changing warfare technology seems at least somewhat exaggerated.

[22] See the extensive complaints in the letter from Jorge Cabral, Governor of Portuguese India, to the King of Portugal, *ANTT*, CC, I/83/90, dated 21 February 1550, mostly relating to the unfortunate experiences of João Rodrigues de Carvalho, captain of the *nav* on the *Carreira de Pegu*.

of the Mughal Shahjahan, had a fleet of five or six ships constructed after the Portuguese design. Both in this regard, and where the increased use of firearms and cannon in the expansion wars was concerned, the availability of individual Portuguese of the lower classes – bombardiers, cannon-founders, and musketeers – who were anxious to operate independently of the *Estado*, was seized upon by these monarchs. Intermittently then, up to the 1590s, the Portuguese *Estado* conducted with Pegu what might be termed as a 'hostile trade', punctuated by long periods when official Portuguese were wholly forbidden the use of Pegu's ports.[23] In contrast to this, it is possible to see private Portuguese – carefully distancing themselves from Goa and its policies – trading in these ports through fair and foul weather, and doubtless this was a crucial factor in explaining the low value attached to the officially granted concession of the voyage to Pegu in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

Further, by the late 1570s, Pegu's links with Masulipatnam had grown apace. For instance, in the season of 1581, one ship from Pegu at Masulipatnam alone was reported by Diogo do Couto to be so large that 'in duties alone, it was valued at 150,000 *cruzados*'.[24] In addition to these two links – with Aceh and Pegu – Masulipatnam had by the 1580s links with the tin ports of the Malay peninsula (principally Kedah, as also Perak), which were by their very nature damaging to the system which the Portuguese state sought to impose, wherein the centralising function was to lie with Melaka – a port with which Masulipatnam conspicuously avoided trade until 1600.[25]

[23] The anonymous author of the 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', writes in 1581–2, that two years earlier, D. João da Gama, captain-designate of Melaka, had captured a ship from Pegu on its return from the Red Sea. This capture 'coming to the notice of the King of Pegu, he was highly indignant against us, and confiscated the goods of the Portuguese who were in his kingdom and repaid himself completely for what had been taken in the *nao* and returned the rest: From which it resulted that we are at war with him, and from that not only do we receive no profit, but suffer great losses as we miss the commerce of that kingdom, as the foodstuffs do not come from there to Malaca as they used to come before, which is a matter to be remedied' (p. 121–2). Also see n. 22 *supra*, the document cited there showing that relations with Pegu had never been as cordial as the anonymous writer of the 'Livro das Cidades e Fortaleza' claims.

[24] Couto, *Da Ásia,* Década Décima, Parte 1, pp. 14–15.

[25] There is mention of a 'galeão' from Masulipatnam at Kedah as early as 1573 in Jorge de Lemos, *História dos Cercos*, p. 51v. Commercial relations with other Malay peninsula ports may be inferred from the fact that Masulipatnam enjoyed strong links with them in the early seventeenth century. There is as yet no satisfactory account of the role of these ports – Ujangselang, Trang, Kedah, Perak, Bengeri – in the sixteenth century, but see Barbara and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, London, 1982, pp. 57–62 (on Perak), as also G.E. Gerini, 'Historical retrospect of Junk Ceylon Island', *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume II (2), 1905, pp. 20–1, 55,

The Portuguese and Masulipatnam

As we have seen, from the early 1570s on, the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* had identified in Masulipatnam a port inimical to its interests. Their response to this was characteristic, and consisted of licensing Portuguese privateers to lie in wait outside Masulipatnam road, to capture ships of that port, in which enterprise – it was reported – 'great gains were made'.[26] Not all expeditions of this sort met with success though. In 1581, from the chronicle of Diogo do Couto, a long account is available of the travails of one such expedition, commanded by one Gonçalo Vaz de Camoẽs (quite conceivably a relative of the author of the *Lusíadas*), which was despatched from Goa to Masulipatnam to attack two Acehnese and one Peguan ship reported to be there. After a series of mishaps, a conclusive engagement was fought with the latter ship at the mouth of the Irrawaddy, and the Peguan ship – which was one of Bayin-naung's fleet – sunk, though at a considerable cost to the Portuguese raiders. The Acehnese ships, on the other hand, completely eluded their grasp.[27] A further measure of the mixed luck enjoyed by such officially sanctioned pirate expeditions is reflected in a benefice given in 1585 by the King of Portugal to one Pero da Costa, described as a *fidalgo* and cavalier, who had ransomed some Portuguese who were being held captive at Masulipatnam – the remnants of an ill-fated venture of this sort.[28] In general then, these ventures of the *Estado* were no more than straws in the wind. The English traveller Ralph Fitch, passing through Golconda in 1585, reported the prosperity of nearby Masulipatnam, where there was a concourse of ships 'from India, Pegu and Sumatra, richly laden with pepper, spices and c.', confirming the earlier evidence of the Venetian Gasparo Balbi.[29]

passim for Ujangselang. It may be noted that Moreland incorrectly asserts in his *India at the Death of Akbar*, reprint New Delhi, 1962, pp. 197–8, that Masulipatnam in around 1600 traded with Melaka; the point is precisely that it did not.

26 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', p. 124.

27 Diogo do Couto, *Do Ásia,* Década Décima, pp. 74–83. In a diverting account from around 1607, a Portuguese priest chronicling events in Burma also recounts this story, adding a further twist to the effect that the King of Pegu died of an apoplectic stroke on hearing of the loss of the ship. See *ANTT*, Manuscritos da Livraria, No. 1104, fl. 105.

28 Letter from the viceroy D. Duarte de Meneses to the King of Portugal, dated 14 March 1585, in Cunha Rivara, *APO*,. Fascículo V (3), Document 664, pp. 1092–3.

29 Ralph Fitch's account is reproduced in William Foster, ed., *Early Travels in India*, reprint New Delhi, 1968, pp. 15–16; also see *Viaggi alle Indie Orientali di C. Federici e G. Balbi*, ed. Olga Pinto, p. 206.

The Portuguese at Goa were in no position to prevent such a development. Their resources were limited, and their ability to police the Bay of Bengal constrained to the point of non-existence. Besides, with the passage of the 1580s, the network of ports with which Masulipatnam traded continued to expand, encompassing the ports of Mrauk-u and Chittagong in the northern Burmese kingdom of Arakan. Here, a mid sixteenth-century political consolidation under the King Minbin (1531–53), culminating in a highly successful campaign against the collapsing Afghan Sultanate of Bengal, helped bring about the growth of the major port city of Mrauk-u.[30] A spurt of construction activity in the 1540s led to the rapid expansion of the port in physical terms, and it was here that the Kings of Arakan held court. By the last quarter of the sixteenth century, trade with other Bay littoral ports had grown considerably, aided once again by the direct participation in shipping and maritime commerce on the part of the Kings as well as prominent officials at Mrauk-u.[31]

In large measure, the influence that the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* could bring to bear on such areas was dependent, by the last fifteen years of the sixteenth century, on the purely fortuitous presence of private Portuguese there. The rewards and benefices given for services rendered were far from equitably distributed in Portuguese Asia, and ties of patronage, and family were the chief modes of securing a plum post as a grant from the Crown. Thus, the major positions of viceroys, governors, captains of Melaka, Cochin and Ormuz circulated in a limited nexus, and this normally meant that posts in the Bay of Bengal, at Nagapattinam or Hughli for example, were left to the lower or poorly connected nobility, and to *casados* of long service resident in those ports. Still other sections of the lower nobility, as well as common soldiers had no recourse but to push the frontier back, and move into areas where these existent linkages did

[30] For an account of the growth of Mrauk-u, see M.S. Collis, 'The city of golden Mrauk-u', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Volume XII (3), 1923, pp. 244–56, and *idem* and San Shwe Bu, 'Arakan's place in the civilization of the Bay', *Journal of the Burma Research Society,* Volume XIV (1), 1925, pp. 34–52. Also see G.E. Harvey, *A History of Burma,* London, 1925, pp. 137–41.

[31] The above accounts (in n. 30), together with the travel account of Frei Sebastian Manrique give us an interesting view of the Arakan polity – which was Buddhist in theory, but which absorbed many Islamic elements on account of the influence of the Afghan Sultanate of Bengal. This is reflected in the dual titles of its rulers, in the style of coinage, as well as in administrative nomenclature. The important shipowners and merchants at Mrauk-u in the early seventeenth century included a good many Muslims, and the local officials had titles such as *Kotwal.* See *AR*, OB, VOC, 1087, fl. 185v, only one of numerous such pieces of evidence.

not count for much.[32] The large proportion of Portuguese who served as mercenaries, be it in Siam, Burma or Bijapur,[33] and who deserted or left royal service to become private traders, reflects in large measure this perception: that rewards were not forthcoming within the system as it functioned. But curiously enough, such persons only rarely cut themselves off from the *Estado* completely, and often used the position which they had gained through independent activity to lobby for conventional rewards, such as membership in the military orders, or the title of 'noble of the Royal Household'. The case of Diogo Veloso, mercenary at the Cambodian court in the late sixteenth century, is thus a fairly typical one.[34] Within the Bay of Bengal and Arakan too, there were Portuguese with parallel careers, who used the advantageous position they had independently gained at the Arakan court to pressurise Goa into giving them conventional rewards. The Bay of Bengal was in this sense an important frontier region for a large section of the Portuguese in Asia; it was a crucial arena where upward mobility – so limited otherwise – was made possible.

On the other hand, there were other Portuguese mercenaries who put themselves quite beyond the pale. One such person, Fernão Rodrigues Caldeira, served to mediate relations to a certain extent between the Qutb Shahi court of Golconda and the administration at Goa in the 1580s and 1590s, but was in Goa's eyes a 'renegade'.[35] The negotiations between the two courts began late in the 1580s, after almost two decades of prolonged hostility. A provisional agreement

[32] I am indebted to Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz, with whom I have discussed many of these ideas. They appear in part in his introduction to the account of the Portuguese embassy to Gaur in 1521, n. 13. For a preliminary formulation of this notion, of renegades and mercenaries as arising from the nature of class relations in Portuguese India, also see Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, 'Exiles and renegades in early 16th century Portuguese India', *IESHR*, Volume XXIII (3), 1986.

[33] It is well-known that Portuguese mercenaries fought on both sides during the Siam-Burma conflicts of the 1580s and 1590s. See for example Lieberman 'Europeans, trade and the unification', pp. 211–14.

[34] On Diogo Veloso, see *ANTT*, Manuscritos da Livraria, No. 1109, fls. 1–8, as also the brief account in Bernard F. Groslier, *Angkor et le Cambodge au XVIe siècle d'après les sources portugaises et espagnoles* (in collaboration with C.R. Boxer), Paris, 1958, pp. 34–45. There is also a brief reference in J.J.A. Campos, 'Early Portuguese accounts of Thailand', *Journal of the Thailand Research Society*, Volume XXXII (1), 1940.

[35] Before appearing at the Golconda court, Fernão Rodrigues Caldeira had already had an interesting and chequered career. We find him, for instance, in the shipwreck of the *nau Santiago* off the African east coast in 1585. In the account of the wreck, published in B. Gomes de Brito, *História Trágico-Marítima*, Lisbon, 1736, Part II, pp. 63–152, we note that his behaviour was somewhat suspect in the eyes of fellow-survivors; see especially pp. 109–22.

was reached around 1590, by which the Sultan of Golconda, Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, agreed to send a shipload of rice (around 300 *khandis* or 10,000 kg) every year to supply Portuguese garrisons at Ceylon. The destination was subsequently modified to Melaka, at the time in some difficulties with respect to its food supplies, since the flow from the Pegu ports had ceased. The arrangement was viewed in Goa as a considerable triumph: in their view, the *Estado* had reduced this recalcitrant ruler to a state where he paid *páreas* (tribute) to Philip of Spain (and Portugal).[36] Behind this rhetoric however, realities were more mundane. In fact, the shipload of rice was to be paid for, and was part of a general agreement under which Goa was to issue several *cartazes* (or passports for safe navigation) to Masulipatnam shipping. This may seem a curious phenomenon: why after all should Golconda shipping suddenly require the protection of the *cartaz* system? The answer is not hard to find, and lies in the fact that it was around 1590 that Masulipatnam's links with the Red Sea and Mecca were initiated. Evidence from the seventeenth century shows quite clearly that the patterns of textiles demanded by consumers in the Middle East were those produced not in southern and central Coromandel, but in northern Coromandel and interior Andhra (near Warangal). Initially, in the sixteenth century, one may speculate on whether these north Coromandel textiles were transshipped overland to ports such as Dabhol, Chaul, Goa, and Surat, whence they made their way to the Middle East. Whatever be the case, it seems probable that the textiles of northern Coromandel already enjoyed a market in the Middle East, even before the initiation of direct overseas links either between the Red Sea and Masulipatnam, or between the Persian Gulf and the port.

The link with the Red Sea, initiated – as we have noted above – around 1590, took the form of a large ship, constructed on account of the Sultan of Golconda at the shipyard in Narsapurpettai, in the west Godavari region. The ship made an annual voyage, leaving Masulipatnam in late December, or more frequently in early to mid January, and returning in September. It carried on board not only the goods of the Sultan, his nobles and major merchants, and the rice the Sultan sent to be distributed as alms in Mecca, but also a large number of pilgrims on the Hajj, each with his own little bundle of wares to finance his voyage. The resemblance between this ship and

[36] Letter from Philip of Spain to the Viceroy at Goa, dated 6 February 1589, published in Cunha Rivara, ed., *APO*, Fascículo III, Document 59; it is important to note that the rice was promised, but apparently never delivered.

other pilgrim vessels, the monstrous Mughal ships from Surat, or the Bijapur vessels from Dabhol, was quite considerable, and, as in the other cases, a good deal was at stake both monetarily and in terms of prestige. Clearly enough then, while the *cartaz* system was treated negligently within the Bay of Bengal, where we have argued that the *Estado*'s capacity to enforce it was extremely limited save in a few cases (such as trade to Melaka), Golconda shipping and mercantile interests – as well as the court itself – regarded Portuguese naval strength in the western Indian Ocean as well as off Ceylon (an extremely vulnerable area in the voyage to and from the Red Sea) with far greater trepidation. The strategy followed at Golconda was far from simple though. Already in 1591, the correspondence between Lisbon and Goa mentions, 'The King of Masulipatnam, after taking some *cartazes* that were given him last year, has changed his mind about handing over the 300 *khandis* of rice'. The only remedy that could be suggested was that in future, '*cartazes* should carry a declaration that they would not be valid unless the rice were handed over'.[37] When this did not improve matters, a fleet was despatched from Goa in 1594 to impede navigation between Masulipatnam and the ports of Pegu, one of the most valuable commercial links of the north Coromandel port. Once again, as in the earlier instances mentioned in the 1580s, this expedition – though commanded by João Cayado de Gamboa, a veteran of punitive ventures – had mixed fortunes, as the next year we hear of attempts being made to free thirteen Portuguese being held prisoner at Golconda, who had been part of this expeditionary fleet.[38] The attempts to ransom these captives were impeded greatly, it was felt, by the renegade Fernão Rodrigues Caldeira, whom we have already mentioned, and who it appears advised the Sultan of Golconda on this question. Finally, the ransom was effected, and an ambassador from Golconda arrived at Goa in 1595 to reactivate negotiations regarding the *cartazes*.[39]

[37] Letter from Philip of Spain to the viceroy at Goa, dated 12 February 1591, published in Cunha Rivara, *APO*, Fascículo III, Document 76, Part 33.

[38] Letter from Philip of Spain to the Viceroy Matias de Albuquerque dated 18 February 1595, in Cunha Rivara, *APO*, Fasc. III, Document 162, Part 20. Cayado de Gamboa had earlier led expeditions against Ullal in Kanara, and Surat. See Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década Décima, Parte 2, pp. 193, 611, 637–40, 670–3, *passim*. The same *fidalgo* may be encountered somewhat later (in 1613) as the purchaser of the China-Japan voyage concession in the General Auction held in that year; see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 38, fls. 334–45.

[39] Letters from Philip of Spain to Matias de Albuquerque dated 2 January 1596 and 12 February 1597, in Cunha Rivara, *APO*, Fasc. III, Documents 204 and 243.

By 1598, it began to appear that the Goa administration had once again been outmanoeuvred by the Golconda court. A provisional agreement had been signed at Goa, and pending ratification at Golconda, some *cartazes* were handed over. The Portuguese sent an ambassador, Francisco Ferreira de Almeida, to Golconda to hasten the ratification, but he, after remaining at that court for several months, returned to Goa furtively and in haste, declaring his life to have been in peril, and stating that anyway, 'progress in that court was bound to be sluggish at least until the ships that had left for Mecca would return'.[40] This placed Goa in a quandary. On the one hand, the continued negotiations of over a decade had yielded little by way of benefit to the *Estado*, while on the other hand, letters from Europe constantly urged them to maintain peace with the Qutb Shah, and if possible even foster a defensive alliance between the Deccan Sultanates to halt the southward progress of the Mughals, viewed at the time with undisguised alarm.[41] The negotiations finally bore fruit of a sort around 1600, when an arrangement was reached whereby a Portuguese captain was stationed at Masulipatnam to collect the tribute and issue *cartazes* for Red Sea bound vessels. The latter task was performed well enough; as for the former, the letters of the Bishop of São Tomé (written in the early seventeenth century) suggest that the rice tribute continued to be elusive. We know of only one individual who held this post (of Portuguese captain at Masulipatnam) – a certain Henrique Raposo – but his position in the port, caught between the Sultanate's authorities and the likes of Fernão Rodrigues Caldeira, cannot have been too pleasant.[42] The standing instructions at Goa in the period were to somehow arrange the assassination of Caldeira and one or two other renegades resident in the Deccan Sultanates.[43] By all accounts, such instructions remained dead letters in reality.

[40] *HAG*, Monções do Reino 2B, fls. 490–90v, letter dated 15 January 1598.

[41] See the letter dated 12 February 1597 in Cunha Rivara, *APO*, Fasc. III, Doc. 243. The same obsession continues into the seventeenth century as well; see R.A. de Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documentos Remettidos da Índia*, Volume II, pp. 382–3.

[42] On the captain at Masulipatnam, see *British Museum*, London (Manuscript Room) (henceforth *BM*), Additional Manuscript 9853, fl. 28v, which relates how in the early 17th century the Jesuits from São Tomé used to go to Masulipatnam to confess the Portuguese captain there. We also find mention of Henrique Raposo, former captain of Masulipatnam in *ANTT*, Manuscritos da Livraria No. 1109, fl. 18; for a solitary later grant of the captaincy of Masulipatnam, which certainly never took effect, made to Luís de Azevedo Barreiros in February 1614, see *ANTT*, Chancelaria D. Filipe II, Livro 29, fl. 287v. The failure to collect the tribute of rice is mentioned in *HAG*, Monções do Reino 9–11 (single volume), fls. 183–4.

[43] See the letter from *APO*, Fasc. III cited in note 38 *supra*. The use of assassination

The Bay of Bengal commercial system, c. 1600

The commerce of the Bay of Bengal in around 1600 represented a well-knit sub-system of the Indian Ocean commerce in the period. If one considers the circle of ports from Aceh, through the Malay Peninsula, Mergui, Pegu, Arakan, Bengal, Orissa and Coromandel, one finds a dense criss-crossing network of commerce. Leakages from the system were few, and were largely from two nodal points – Melaka and Aceh – which also belonged to another network, that of the great north-west/south-east axis of trade. Besides these, leakages were limited to the annual ship full of pilgrims and textiles that made its way from Masulipatnam to Jiddah, the coastal trade to Malabar from Bengal and Coromandel, and the odd other link. There are good reasons for stating then that – *grosso modo* – the western Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal were in about 1600 two quasi-independent sub-systems in the Indian Ocean commerce. At the very least, one can assert that the 'high seas' trade carried on *across* the boundary of these sub-systems was only a minor fraction of that carried on *within* each of these networks.

Within the Bay of Bengal itself, as has been shown, there were a good many ports outside the ambit of official Portuguese control. An interesting common feature of many of these ports, which appears to have come about from the late sixteenth century on, was the importance in them of Persian merchants, who were a significant force in the Bay of Bengal trade, whether one looks to Pipli, Masulipatnam, Mrauk-u or Mergui.[44]

The other dimension of trade within the Bay of Bengal was the part over which the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* did have some control, by

by Goa as an instrument of policy was not uncommon in respect of awkward renegades; thus the case of a Portuguese cannon founder in the service of the Adil Shah in the early seventeenth century, whom the viceroy had assassinated, rewarding the assassin – ironically enough – with the post of clerical assistant to the magistrate at Diu. See *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 24, fls. 83–v.

[44] The importance of these Persians at Golconda is well-known; see for example an early Dutch account from 1608, *AR*, VOC. 548, as also the 'Anonymous Relation' in W.H. Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, pp. 77–8. On Persians elsewhere on the Bay littoral, see Jean Aubin, 'Les Persans au Siam sous le règne de Narai [1656–88]', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, IV, 1980, pp. 95–126 and David K. Wyatt, 'A Persian mission to Siam in the reign Narai', *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume LXII (1), 1974, pp. 151–7. An important general account of the trade of Masulipatnam in the 1590s, which serves to confirm the idea developed here of a Bay of Bengal system of trade, is an anonymous relation in the *Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Distrital* (henceforth *BP e AD*), Évora, Códice C III/2–17, fls. 183–7v, especially fl. 186v.

means of its system of concessions, as well as by other more direct means. These concessions covered such navigational lines as those between São Tomé and Melaka, between Nagapattinam and a number of Malay peninsula ports and Mergui, as well as that between São Tomé and Pegu. There is however the thorny issue already touched upon, that of the ability to enforce these concessional monopolies.

Perhaps the only one to be wholly effectively enforced was that between São Tomé (or Coromandel in general) and Melaka. Examining the evidence for the last quarter of the sixteenth century, an interesting phenomenon emerges. With the trade from Coromandel to Melaka being limited to one ship annually (with the exception of rice-laden craft from Nagapattinam occasionally pressed into service in times of shortage), the tendency was quite naturally for concession holders to make the voyages in the largest ships possible. Thus, bearing in mind the restriction imposed by the concession, the Coromandel-Melaka run became one made in a single, enormous carrack, laden with the freight goods of a hundred or more merchants, and with a large number of such peddlers on board, besides the *fidalguia* and their retinues, *mestiço* merchants and the large complement of domestic slaves. In October 1602, a joint Anglo-Dutch privateering expedition under Sir James Lancaster and Joris van Spilberghen captured one of these monsters in the Straits of Melaka. The immensity of the prize awed the captors (and this awe permeates both the Dutch and English accounts of the capture), the carrack being estimated by John Davis, one of those present, at 900 tons burthen. From the ship, over a leisurely four days, the captors unloaded all of 960 bales of white and painted textiles, eighty chests of the same (presumably including some of the more valuable *pintados*), forty other wooden containers with textiles, besides large amounts of rice, oil and provisions, meant in part for Melaka and in part to feed the 600 persons on board. Though disappointed by the lack of gold or silver coins on board (for which they would have been better advised to capture the carrack on her return voyage), the Dutch nonetheless declared themselves impressed by the grandees on board, 'mostly rich and considerable persons, dressed in a costly fashion, with silks and velvets'.[45] This evidence notwithstanding, one would argue that the system of concessions must have reduced

[45] The Dutch account of this engagement – the more detailed – is to be found in the Linschoten Vereniging publication (editor unspecified), *De Reis van Joris van Spilbergen naar Ceylon, Atjeh, en Bantam, 1601–04*, The Hague, 1933, pp. 66–71,

Melaka's trade with Coromandel – if not in comparison with what had obtained in the freer ambience of the mid sixteenth century, then in comparison to what might have been the case in the absence of the concession system. Economic logic would certainly point to such a conclusion; monopolies function, as is well-known, by restricting output (here commercial traffic) to a level lower than would have obtained under competition, and this forms the basis of the category of income we have discussed, of 'monopoly rent', which accrued to the holder of the concession. Thus, ironical though it may seem, the Portuguese system of concessions only served to reduce the traffic flowing through those parts of the trading network over which they had some control, and this must in turn have contributed to traffic being diverted in some part to alternative channels, just as the shoring up of some parts of a dike might lead to breaches elsewhere. The same argument could be applied, albeit with less force, where other navigational lines – Nagapattinam to Mergui for example – were concerned. Here the monopoly was not totally enforceable in reality, but once again, ironically enough, the brunt of the suffering is likely to have been borne by the Portuguese settlers at Nagapattinam itself. For them to equip and despatch a ship from that port to a port for which a Crown concession existed, and was held by someone else, was far more difficult than for a Persian from Masulipatnam, or even a Marakkayar shipowner from Nagapattinam, to evade the monopoly. Besides, these concessions were frequently held by the captain of Nagapattinam, *ex officio*, a fact that goes a long way towards helping us understand the constant friction between the captains of this settlement and the merchants and shipowners settled there. Nonetheless, the Portuguese documents of the period make it clear that even the Portuguese settlers at São Tomé and Nagapattinam frequently attempted to flout the regulations imposed by the *Estado da Índia* on commerce, trading with such ports as Ujangselang, Perak, Kedah and Trang, even at the risk of an open confrontation with the concession holder.[46] However, it is clear that the existence of the

81–2. The English account is in C. R. Markham, ed., *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to the East Indies*, London, The Hakluyt Society, 1877, pp. 92–3. John Davis estimates the burthen of the ship at 900 tons, and we are informed that the worth of the eighth share the Dutch received was 16,500 *rials*. This would imply that the total value of the cargo was over 132,000 *rials*. For Portuguese reactions to the capture, see *BM*, Additional Manuscript 9853, fl. 54.

[46] Matters were complicated by the fact that the captains of Melaka claimed the exclusive right to trade in these ports. See the 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', pp. 122–3.

concession *must* have been a positive disincentive to those without it, since the concessions continued to be much sought-after even in the early years of the seventeenth century.[47]

Besides Melaka, over which the *Estado* had control throughout this period, there was only one other navigational line over which it gained extensive control, and that only for an extremely limited period. In the late 1590s, a group of Portuguese mercenaries based at the court of Arakan succeeded in currying considerable favour with the rulers there. On the occupation in the late 1590s by Arakan of considerable sections of lower Burma, one of these mercenary captains, Felipe de Brito e Nicote, was left in charge of a wooden fort in the port town of Siriam, in the Irrawaddy delta.[48] Felipe de Brito, like Diogo Veloso, Brás Ruís, and so many other 'entrepreneur' Portuguese of the era,[49] continued to harbour ambitions of gaining conventional rewards within the world of the *Estado*, both for himself and his family; thus, while physically outside the Portuguese empire, his values continued to be defined in its terms. In return for the Habit of Christ (which is to say membership in the most prestigious military order of the time), and the title of noble of the royal household, which he negotiated through the viceroy at Goa, he agreed to fortify Siriam and set up a customs house there for the *Estado*.[50] This essentially improbable enterprise called for a small garrison of Portuguese, isolated and distant from any existent supply lines, to maintain themselves continuously in a hostile environment. That they managed to do this until 1612 was in itself remarkable, though probably largely the result of the fact that internecine warfare between local powers in lower Burma early in the century prevented any of them from making a sustained attempt against de Brito's garrison. The enterprise is educative though from our point of view, demonstrating as it does two significant characteristics of the

[47] This is clear too from the fact that some of these concessions fetched reasonable prices at the *venda geral* of 1613–14, this at a time when the Dutch were causing some difficulties in the area. See *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 38, fls. 334–45.

[48] On Felipe de Brito e Nicote, see *inter alia*, Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles*, pp. 42–55; *ANTT*, Manuscritos Miscelâneos, No. 1104, fls. 101–2; Cunha Rivara, ed., *APO*, Fasc. VI, pp. 810–12, *passim*; *AHU*, Códice 282, fls. 140–v, 146–147; *HAG*, Monções do Reino 8, fl. 49. For a brief description of the events, see George Winius, 'The "Shadow Empire" of Goa in the Bay of Bangal, *Itinerario*, Volume VII (2), 1983, pp. 83–101.

[49] On these entrepreneurs in Cambodia and Laos, see Groslier, *Angkor et le Cambodge*, pp. 34–8, as well as other references in note 34, *supra*.

[50] See the letters from Philip of Spain to Felipe de Brito, in Cunha Rivara, *APO*, Fasc. VI, pp. 810–12, 859–60, 975–6.

Portuguese Asian empire in the period. One was the anxiety to establish a centrally placed stronghold in the Bay of Bengal in the period, since they recognised that Melaka was not enough.[51] This change of strategy came much too late however. The other aspect, in fact a characteristic of Portugal's Hapsburg interregnum (1581–1640), when Spain and Portugal were under a joint crown, was the tendency to view the empire in Asia increasingly in terms of territorial acquisition.[52] Thus Siriam and the entire Pegu affair was viewed in contemporary rhetoric as the occasion for 'the conquest of Pegu by the Portuguese', and elaborate legal justifications were drawn up, indicating how Philip of Spain was 'under Christian law' more entitled to be King of Pegu than the descendants of the first Taung-ngu dynasty.[53] These were academic aspects to the Pegu question; what was significant however was that, for a brief period around 1600, Siriam did succeed in playing a controlling and centralising role, and in making the concession from Coromandel to Pegu more than a mere piece of paper. This brief episode soon came to an end, with the progressive erosion of Felipe de Brito's resources in the first decade of the seventeenth century. The value of the commerce from São Tomé to Pegu had been estimated around 1580 as some 140,000 to 150,000 *pardaus* and there is little evidence of further expansion on this particular line in subsequent decades.[54] But the growth of trade from Masulipatnam to Pegu continued apace, and the level observed in the early seventeenth century by Dutch factors – of four to five ships a year – had in fact already been attained in the 1590s, when an anonymous Portuguese wrote of 'three or four *naos* which go annually from Masulipatnam to Pegu, laden with textiles and yarn', to the considerable detriment of trade from São Tome.[55]

The developments in the last three decades of the sixteenth century were then the following. Portuguese official control over certain navigational lines within the Bay of Bengal had the unexpected effect

[51] See *HAG*, Monções do Reino, Nos. 9–11, fl. 214, for an *Alvará Régia* dated 13 September 1608, as also an earlier letter dated March 1605, fl. 112.

[52] This tendency comes out clearly for instance in the proposal to create a land-based empire in south India, for which see the correspondence between the King and the viceroy in Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documentos Remettidos da Índia*, Tomo I, pp. 359–60.

[53] This remarkable piece of sophistry is to be found in *ANTT*, Manuscritos Miscelâneos, No. 1104, fls. 101–15.

[54] 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', p. 118.

[55] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1083, fl. 222v; also OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 107. Further, on trade between Masulipatnam and Pegu in the 1590s, see *BP e AD*, Évora, Códice C III/2–17, fls. 186–v.

of making the very commercial structure controlled by them more fragile. Restrictive policies followed with respect to shipping from Coromandel to Melaka, for example, would clearly have contributed to the growth of links with Aceh; as we have argued, both Aceh and Melaka performed essentially the same 'funnel' role, channelling the textiles of Coromandel to the markets of the further Archipelago. The growth in the 1590s of the Sunda Straits route, and the direct trade from Coromandel to Banten, of which one has tantalising glimpses but little firm documentation, may be attributed in part to the same phenomenon. In general then, the restrictive official trade policies of the *Estado da Índia*, which we have associated with the 'second wind', and the concession system, helped to damp trade along certain routes and to redistribute it to others. It seems clearly to have left those who were to a certain extent under the shadow of the *Estado* at a disadvantage in comparison to those who associated themselves with the parallel system that came to exist in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Even the Portuguese merchants of São Tomé and Nagapattinam are found to be increasingly frequenting ports over which the Crown made no claim of monopoly, *pace* the growing trade with Perak in the 1590s.[56] This led as well to the growing use by these merchants and shipowners of a few routes to which they had free access and the encouragement of the *Estado* as well. The second half of the century thus witnesses the growth of an annual *cafila* from the Coromandel settlements to Goa, comprising a large number of craft, laden with textiles and foodgrain, which rounded the Cape early in February. This then was by way of extending Coromandel's coastal trade links as far up the west coast as Goa, whereas early in the sixteenth century they extended no further north than Malabar.[57]

Coromandel and Company trade, 1605–1650

Between the years 1605 and 1650, three chartered trading companies from north-western Europe appeared off the Coromandel Coast and set up factories in various ports there, thus constituting a new element in the

[56] Letter from the King of Portugal to the viceroy at Goa dated 27 February 1612, in Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, Tomo I, pp. 178–81.

[57] The system developed to convoy these crafts is described clearly for example in *HAG*, Regimentos e Instruções No. 4, MS. 1421, fl. 20–v. While the escort system arose in part in response to Dutch attacks, the convoys date back to the mid-sixteenth century as a protection against attacks off the Malabar coast, and to ensure that ships reached a destination desirable from the viewpoint of Goa.

trade, an element that had been absent from our earlier discussion of the sixteenth century. The Companies in order of their importance were the Dutch Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (henceforth VOC), the English East India Company, and the Danish Dansk Ostindiske Kompagni. Besides, there were minor gadfly attempts on the part of the other European states to have their own national monopolistic companies participate in the trade, attempts which we shall briefly discuss in a subsequent chapter. The presence of the Companies on the Coromandel Coast in this half century and their growing trade contrasts rather sharply with the singular lack of success that they encountered in the same period on the south-western coast.

The Dutch

As is well known, after a phase of competitive trading among the Dutch 'pre-companies' in the period 1594–1602, the several capitals were finally moulded to form a single, united [*verenigde*] East India Company in March 1602. The Company was given a charter by the States-General of the Netherlands, valid for twenty-one years, which gave the VOC monopoly on Dutch trade between the Straits of Magellan and the Cape of Good Hope, 'with authority to wage defensive war, negotiate treaties of peace and alliance, and build fortresses'.[58] It was only in the wake of this that the Dutch succeeded in entering into the trade of the Bay of Bengal, and more specifically that of the Coromandel coast of south-eastern India.

Dutch policy in this period was simple and logical: using as bases entrepôts like Banten and Aceh (particularly the latter), they intended to trade in pepper and Indonesian spices, using when necessary the textiles brought by Asian ships in the normal course of things to Aceh and Banten from Gujarat, Bengal, and the Coromandel coast. The second phase, already incipient in 1602 in the policies of the Verenigde Zeeuwsche Compagnie, was to trace the textiles to their points of origin, using the well-established routes between the textile producing areas and the Indonesian entrepôts. There is an interesting parallel to be drawn here; just as the Portuguese, once in Melaka, began to explore and exploit the pre-existent commercial routes radiating from that entrepôt, the Dutch companies, once

[58] See Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600–1800*, Minneapolis, 1976, p. 33; for a general account, also George Masselman, *The Cradle of Colonialism*, New Haven, 1963, pp. 109–71.

settled in Aceh, proceeded with inexorable logic to explore the major routes emanating from Aceh. One of these was the Gujarat-Aceh nexus, and, as early as 1602, two Dutch factors, De Wolff and Lafer (of the Zeeuwsche Compagnie) had been sent to Surat from Aceh on an Asian ship, with letters from Sultan Alauddin testifying to their credentials.[59] It is no coincidence, given what we have seen of developments in the 1580s and 1590s, that early in the seventeenth century the VOC's ships should make for Masulipatnam from Aceh. In spring 1605, spurred on by contacts with Masulipatnam-based traders at Aceh, the 300 ton yacht *Delft*, from the VOC fleet commanded by Steven van der Hagen, left for the Golconda port, and on arriving there set up a factory and commenced trading.[60] The same yacht made two more voyages on the same route after returning to Aceh late in 1605, the first of these in spring 1606 and the second later in the same year. On the latter occasion, two Dutch factors were sent on an embassy to Golconda, where they succeeded in obtaining a *farman* which fixed import and export duties at Masulipatnam on Dutch trade, and granted them several other privileges.

The broad outlines of the spread of VOC involvement on the Coromandel coast in the period 1600–50 are too well known to require detailed elaboration.[61] In the early years of the decade 1610–20, their chain of factories extended from Masulipatnam in northern Coromandel, through Pulicat in the centre of the coast, to Tirupapuliyur in the Senji region. By the mid 1620s, direct involvement in trade in southern Coromandel through factories had been replaced by the extensive use of prosperous local merchants as intermediaries. It was only in the 1640s that the VOC attempted once again to set up factories in the stretch from Cuddalore to Point Calimere, and this attempt met with only a limited degree of success. For much of the period then, the two major centres of the VOC Coromandel enterprise remained Masulipatnam and Pulicat, the

[59] M.A.P. Roelofsz., *De Vestiging der Nederlanders ter Kuste Malabar*, The Hague, 1943, pp. 29–30.

[60] On this, see Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel 1605–1690*, pp. 15–16. The best and most detailed account to date remains that of Heert Terpstra, *De Vestiging van de Nederlanders aan de Kust van Koromandel*, Groningen, 1911, pp. 27–44. The third voyage of the *Delft*, in early 1606, is recorded in detail in Isaac Commelin, ed., *Begin ende Voortgangh van de Vereenighde Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, Volumes, Amsterdam, 1646, Volume II, Verhael XII, 'De tweede voyagie naer Oost-Indien gedaen bij Steven van der Haghen', pp. 50–69.

[61] For the best general accounts, see Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, and S. Arasaratnam, 'De VOC in Ceylon en Coromandel in de 17de en 18de eeuw', in M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz. ed., *De VOC in Azië*, Bussum, 1976, pp. 14–64.

former an unfortified factory, the latter the seat of the Fortress Geldria, where a garrison was maintained, and from where the administration of Dutch trade on the entire coast was carried on. Further, around Masulipatnam, the VOC had numerous satellite factories, both along the coast and in the interior, in such places as Nizamapatnam (Peddapalli), Palakollu and Draksharama.

From its earliest years on the Indian south-east coast, the VOC was essentially interested in the export of textiles. Other commodities procured in the region included saltpeter, cotton yarn, indigo, diamonds, rice, and even slaves, but all these – whether taken individually or even collectively – paled into insignificance when compared to the value of textiles in the export cargoes. When one examines the total value of exports by the VOC from Coromandel in the period, the picture that emerges is shown in table 4.2.[62] It would appear then that exports by the Dutch Company grew considerably over the period 1605–50, eventually peaking in the mid 1660s at a level around f. 2,600,000, and declining thereafter.[63] The most marked periods of growth are between 1615 and 1620, when exports double in value from about f. 250,000 to over f. 500,000, and then the period from about 1638 to 1645, when – from an average of just over f. 500,000 – a leap is made to an annual average export of somewhat over f. 1,500,000. To understand the growth of exports in these periods, it is worth investigating in some detail the final destination of these exports, and the markets for which they were intended.

In essence the Companies – whether one refers to the Dutch, the English or the Danes – supplied two sets of markets with Coromandel goods. On the one hand, they competed with private Portuguese and Asian merchants in the Bay of Bengal littoral, in the Indonesian Archipelago, in mainland south-east Asia, and in West Asia. On the other hand, they exported Coromandel goods – textiles, diamonds, indigo, saltpeter and cotton yarn – to the markets of Europe and West Africa via the Cape route. In the latter endeavours, they competed not with Asian merchants, but with the Portuguese *Carreira da Índia*, through which, in the last decades of the sixteenth

[62] The export figures for the period after 1630 are, by and large, taken from Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, pp. 140–1. The only exceptions are those for 1637 and 1639, which, like those of the period before 1630 are calculated from invoice values preserved at the *Algemeen Rijksarchief*, The Hague, Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren.

[63] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, pp. 142–3. Textile export figures for the 18th century are available in S. Arasaratnam, 'The Dutch East India Company and its Coromandel trade, 1700–1740', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkekunde*, Deel 123 (3), 1966, pp. 325–46, especially p. 337

Table 4.2. *VOC exports from Coromandel 1608–50*, (annual averages)

Period	Value (in florins)
1608	110,143
1614	279,975
1621–5	567,366
1626–30	657,207
1631–5	419,839
1636–40	652,270
1641–5	1,017,559
1646–50	1,693,677

Source: See note 62.

century, there had begun a trickle of Coromandel textiles, carried first to Goa or Cochin and thence on the *naus* to Lisbon. In the period from 1580 – 1600, the total volume of textiles thus carried was in the region of 10 per cent of total cargo-space on the *naus* of the *Carreira*, and as records from the early seventeenth century show, these cargoes were dominated by Gujarati varieties as well as by the *khasas* of Bengal. Coromandel textiles, when they did enter the lists, were either *pintados* from central Coromandel, or *bethilles*, *taffechelas* and the plain cloth which the Dutch termed Guinea linen.[64] For the period up to 1626, when the VOC sent ships with goods directly from the Coromandel factories to the Netherlands, it is possible to form an idea of the importance of the European market in the VOC's total export from Coromandel, since the *direct* exports on these ships give us a floor, which total exports of Coromandel goods by the Dutch to Europe must have exceeded, taking into account goods transshipped at Batavia. After 1626, however, the practice of direct shipping from Coromandel to the Netherlands was discontinued, and it now became usual to send all goods intended for the European market to the VOC headquarters at Batavia (in west Java). In the second quarter of the seventeenth century, then, we are forced to take recourse to the order lists sent from the Netherlands to estimate the growth in the market for Coromandel goods in Europe supplied by the VOC, a procedure rendered somewhat problematic by the fact that orders might be fulfilled to a greater or lesser degree from year to year. For the period up to 1626, however, when direct trade from Coromandel

[64] For evidence, see *AHU*, Caixas da India, No. 3, Document 152; for other references, see Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India*, p. 136.

to Holland was carried on, the figures in Table 4.3 indicate the cargo values in absolute terms, and as a fraction of total Dutch exports from Coromandel.[65]

An examination of the bills of lading of the ships in the period proves revealing, and enables us to understand the structure of European demand supplied by the VOC in the first two decades and a half of the seventeenth century. In essence, the exports were of four commodities: indigo, saltpeter, cotton yarn and textiles. The *facturas* of the period 1622–6 reveal that exports of indigo accounted for about f. 27,000 to f. 28,000 while those of cotton yarn accounted for a further f. 20,000 to f. 25,000. Of the textiles, those of predominant importance were Guinea linen, *salampuris, percallas, muris* and *bethilles*, the four accounting in 1626 for as much as f. 84,000 of the cargo, of which over a half (in value terms) were the single category, Guinea linen.[66]

A close look at the evolution of orders for the European market in the subsequent period 1628–50 (during which we have at least sixteen separate lists of annual orders) shows the growing importance of Coromandel textiles in the orders for Europe. Saltpeter retains its importance, while indigo and cotton yarn, earlier staples of the Coromandel-Europe trade, decline, or at best remain constant in absolute terms. In the close of the period (1652), the order lists show that the VOC's total export orders for Coromandel include as high a component as 30 per cent destined for consumption in Europe, of which f. 500,000 are textiles alone, mainly the five broad types mentioned earlier: *bethilles* (f. 114,000), *muris* (f. 88,000), *percallas* (f. 40,000), *salampuris* (f. 80,000) and Guinea linen (f. 75,000).[67] This is particularly significant, representing as it does an increase of 160 per cent over the orders for these five categories of textiles in 1642.[68] Thus, a considerable expansion was under way in the VOC's projected exports of textiles for the European market in the last decade of our period, the 1640s, which suggests that the Dutch

[65] These figures are taken from J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer, eds., *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Volume III (Homeward bound voyages), The Hague, 1979.

[66] See the bills of lading of the ships *Schoonhoven* (1626), *Leeuwin* (1625) and *Koning David* (1626), preserved in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1084, fl. 190; VOC. 1084, fl. 176, and VOC. 1090, fls. 222–35 respectively.

[67] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1188, 'Calculatie wat de jaarlyckse eyssen van de Kust Coromandel ende der onderhorende comptoiren uijt t' vaderlandt ende India omtrent komen te kosten', fls. 256–60.

[68] For the order list of 1642, see Kristof Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620–1740*, 2nd edition, The Hague, 1981, p. 136.

Table 4.3. *Direct trade from Coromandel to Holland, 1616–26*

Year	Value (in florins)	% of total exports
1616	88,907	?
1619	123,667	42.3
1621	130,191	25.5
1622	211,770	37.3
1623	135,859	22.3
1624	71,022	15.5
1625	159,502	23.0
1626	128,150	22.7

Source: See note 65.

opened up at least one significant new market for Coromandel textiles in the period up to 1650, which, in the early years of the seventeenth century (when the European market was supplied solely by the ships of the Portuguese *Carreira*), could scarcely have been of more than minor dimensions.[69]

The position of the VOC in respect of the Asian markets was more ambiguous, for here it is not clear whether the Dutch expanded their share at the expense of other trading groups, or whether they partook of a growing market. To trace the history of the Dutch intra-Asian commerce from Coromandel in broad strokes: from a figure of no more than f. 200,000 in 1615, Dutch exports to Asian markets from their Coromandel factories had in 1650 reached around six times that figure, with orders for south-east Asia (which accounted for 90 per cent of total Dutch intra-Asian exports from Coromandel) in 1652 being somewhat in excess of f. 1,500,000.[70] The markets within south-east Asia that the Dutch carried the goods to included the Moluccas, Banda, Makassar, Java, the Sumatran west coast and the Malay peninsula, as well as Thailand, Cochin-China and Japan, the last being (properly speaking) in east Asia. There is always a problem in interpreting such lists of orders, for it is clear that – while never

[69] The fragmentary evidence we have suggests that textiles on the Portuguese carracks are unlikely to have exceeded 10–15 per cent of cargo space in the close of the sixteenth century. See Niels Steensgaard, 'The return cargoes of the *Carreira da Índia* in the 16th century', in De Souza, ed., *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions*. However, textile trade on the Cape route in the late sixteenth century certainly seems to have been larger than at the beginning of the same century. For earlier cargoes, see Geneviève Bouchon, 'L' Inventaire de la cargaison rapportée de l'Inde en 1505', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, III, 1976, pp. 101–36, and, by the same author, *Navires et Cargaisons retour de l' Inde en 1518*, Paris, 1977.

[70] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1188, fls. 256–60.

over-fulfilled – they would have been under-fulfilled on varying occasions, to varying degrees. Nonetheless, the orders do represent an important indication of the growth of VOC trade in different directions. With a view to capturing the growing place of the VOC in the Coromandel-south-east Asia trade, the figures in Table 4.4 (at constant 1640–1 prices) are of some interest.[71] These figures (rounded off to the nearest 500 *florins*) make two features quite clear. First, that, in the period 1615–50, there was a massive expansion in Dutch exports from Coromandel to south-east Asia, and secondly, that, as our earlier general figures on VOC exports seemed to indicate, much of this expansion took place from the late 1630s on, and more particularly between then and about 1645. These textiles were intended in large measure for sale in the markets of the Archipelago, where the Dutch had, by means of exclusive contracts with local rulers, succeeded in the first half of the seventeenth century in capturing a major share of spice production. The effectiveness of this monopsony was never total, but the effect of such policies on the VOC's competitors is unambiguous; it is clear that other traders must have suffered as a consequence, and that the entrepôt trade carried on through Banten, Aceh and other western Indonesian centres paid a notional price in order to further trade through Batavia.

English trade

In contrast to the Dutch, the English were relatively late entrants into the Coromandel trade, and this fact, together with their lack of resources and substantially smaller capital in relation to that of the VOC meant that their approach to trade in the period up to 1650 was in large measure a reactive one.[72] Thwarted by the Dutch on

[71] The order lists used are the following:
1617: *AR*, OB, VOC. 1066, fl. 121, VOC. 1067, fls. 37–8v, published in Om Prakash, ed., *The Dutch Factories in India, 1617–1623*, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 40–4, 53–6.
1623: *AR*, OB, VOC. 1080, fls. 80v – 90v, published in *Dutch Factories*, pp. 251–5.
1626: *AR*, Bataviasche Uitgaand Briefboek (henceforth BUB), Anno 1626, VOC. 853, fls. 89–92.
1640: *AR*, BUB, VOC. 864, fls. 396–407, with a price list attached, fls. 407–8.
1644: *AR*, BUB, VOC. 868, fls. 679–87.
1650: *AR*, BUB, VOC. 874, fls. 318–24.
The prices available from 1640 have been taken by category of textile and multiplied with the quantities stated in the order lists to obtain the figures in the table.

[72] For the early history of English trade, see Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade*, pp. 38–44, and K.N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600–1640*, London, 1965.

Table 4.4. *VOC textile orders, Coromandel to south-east Asia, 1617–50*

Year	Value (in florins)
1617	300,000
1623	468,500
1626	455,000
1640	824,000
1644	1,300,000
1650	1,551,000

Source: See note 71.

numerous occasions, both on the coast and in the consuming markets for Coromandel goods, their aims as well as their methods were often those dictated by necessity rather than choice. This was evident right from the outset, for, even as early as 1614 (the first English voyage to Coromandel), they were forced by Dutch strength in the further Archipelago to avoid trading there, and had to make do with second-best alternative markets for Coromandel goods, such as Banten or Patani.[73] Between 1615, when the *Globe* (the first English vessel to trade at Coromandel) left for England, and 1619, the English could do little to improve their position in the eastern Archipelago. Competition from Portuguese private traders constrained their efforts at Makassar, while Amboyna, the Bandas and Moluccas were bones of contention with the VOC.

The Anglo-Dutch Truce which came into effect in Asia in April 1620 followed two years of bitter struggle between the Companies, mainly in the Indonesian Archipelago, and particularly around Batavia and in the Moluccas.[74] However, on the Coromandel Coast, the confrontation was kept at a low key, as the English, with factories at Nizamapatnam and Masulipatnam, and little of importance farther south on the coast, could ill afford to enter into armed struggle with the prosperous and relatively well-supplied Dutch. While Matthew Duke, the English factor at Nizamapatnam, fumed and fretted, declaring that 'theis buterboxes [the Dutch] are groanne soe insolent, that yf they be suffred but a whit longer, they will make claims to the

[73] W.H. Moreland, ed., *Peter Floris – His Voyage to the East Indies in the Globe, 1611–1615*, London, 1934, p. 41; D.K. Bassett, 'English trade in the Celebes, 1613–67', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Volume XXXI, Part 1, 1958, pp. 1–39, pp. 2–4. Floris did send a representative, John Parsons, to Sulawesi to enquire of trade prospects there, but nothing came of it.

[74] Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade*, pp. 42–4.

whole Indies',[75] the Dutch for their part insisted that if they were not careful, 'they [the English] will shear the sheep, and leave us to shear the pigs'.[76] The Dutch had in truth little reason to be insecure, at least where the Coromandel trade went. English exports in the period up to 1625 were usually in the region of 20,000 to 25,000 *rials*, and only on the odd occasion (as in 1622) did they reach as much as 35,000 *rials*. This figure was in 1622 estimated by the English on Coromandel as no more than a sixth of Dutch exports (with each *rial* worth 2.5 *florins*).[77] To understand the limited character of English trade from Coromandel in the period, however, it is necessary to sketch some of the problems faced by the Company in the consuming markets for Coromandel goods, and in particular in south-east Asia.

An English factory had been settled at Banten in 1602 and in the first decade of the seventeenth century a whole host of other factories from Japan to Sumatra were set up too.[78] Yet, in the face of overt and covert Dutch opposition, the subsequent decade and a half saw the English losing ground both in south-east Asia and in the Far East. The hostilities of the period 1618–20 had been succeeded by a brief sharing arrangement in the phase 1620–23, when Dutch and English shared garrisons and expenses in the Bandas, Moluccas and Amboyna. The arrangement, even during the period of its smooth functioning, was an unprofitable one for the English, who even moved their headquarters to Batavia in 1620. However, with the Amboyna incident of 1623, all English factors were withdrawn from shared centres in the Archipelago to Batavia;[79] added to this was the fact that, by 1624, the factories at Patani, Ayutthaya and Japan had also been abandoned. In 1624 then, the English situation east of Melaka was extremely precarious; in addition to Batavia, they had no more than three settlements: at Jambi in Sumatra, Japara in eastern Java, and Makassar in southern Sulawesi. The logic of the Coroman-

[75] Matthew Duke at Petapoli to the Company, dated 9 December 1618, in *EFI [1618–21]*, p. 48.

[76] 'Het ware te wenschen dat van U Ed. aldaer conde in versien werden p. accoort off andere middelen want zij anders de schapen sullen scheren ende wij de werckens ...', in W.Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der VOC* (Henceforth *GM*), Volumes I–III, The Hague, 1960–8, Volume I, p. 25.

[77] Pulicat factors to the Company, *EFI [1622–23]*, pp. 127–8, dated 29 September 1622.

[78] Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, pp. 14–18. In 1617, the English factories in southeast and east Asia included Aceh, Tiku, Banten, Jakarta, Jambi, Patani, Baria, Sukadana, Banjarmassin, Makassar, Banda and Hirado.

[79] See D.K. Bassett, 'The "Amboyna Massacre" of 1623', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Volume I, No. 2, 1960, pp. 1–19.

del factories – 'the left arm of the Moluccas' – now looked dubious indeed, and there were at least some who believed that all trading ventures east of Cape Comorin should be abandoned.[80]

As it turned out, the Coromandel factories were given a new lease of life in the period following 1624, and this was largely on account of the growth of trade involving Makassar. The English Company had settled a factory here as early as July 1613, but it was not until the mid 1620s that Makassar grew in importance, largely as a centre of the clove trade.[81] The Dutch, with their control over Amboyna (1605), Ternate (1607), Bandas (1609) and other islands, were in the period attempting to completely monopolise the clove trade. Cloves had however begun to trickle into Makassar from about 1620, mainly from Spanish-controlled sections of Ternate and Tidore, with the English making their first purchases there in 1622. Between this date and 1643, when the Dutch effectively snuffed out all sources of 'smuggled' cloves, the trade continued to grow apace. The English policy was to use their Coromandel factories – which stretched in the mid 1620s in an arc from Masulipatnam to Armagon – to supply Batavia (up to 1628), and Banten (thereafter) with textiles, which were then carried to Makassar. Direct shipping between Coromandel and Sulawesi was never mooted, unlike in the case of the Danes. The textiles were then used in the Makassar factory to procure cloves, which were shipped in the main to the European market, and in smaller consignments to Masulipatnam, Surat, and later Gombroon.[82]

In the period between about 1624 and 1643, the Dutch used a variety of methods to attempt to stem the flow of cloves, and to check the growth of Makassar. An embassy in 1625 failed to have any effect, nor did measures to control the outflow from the producing areas. In 1634, a Dutch fleet was sent to attack the clove convoy but failed to engage it, so that, in early 1636, as much as 300,000 lbs of cloves were sent on English account to Europe.[83] From 1637, a new tactic was tried, and the VOC signed an accord with the Sultan of

[80] These included the famous polemicist Thomas Mun; Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, p. 67.

[81] On the growth of the port of Makassar, see – in addition to Bassett, 'English trade in the Celebes' – Anthony Reid, 'The rise of Makassar', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, Volume XVII, Double No., Winter/Summer 1983, pp. 117–60, and C.R. Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo: A Portuguese Merchant-Adventurer in South-East Asia, 1624–1667*, The Hague, 1967.

[82] Bassett, 'English trade'.

[83] For a general discussion, see Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, pp. 167–72; more specifically, Bassett, 'English trade', p. 9.

Gowa-Tallo (the effective ruler of the region) enabling them to maintain a factory there in the trading season (February to September). Despite this, English clove procurement and their import of textiles from Coromandel continued to be high, and D.K. Bassett suggests that it reached a peak late in the 1630s, and did not fall appreciably until 1641–42.[84] There was an abrupt change though in the following year, with the Dutch expedition of 1643 which helped crush a rebellion at Hitu, putting an effective closure to the major source of cloves.

In the period after 1643, and up to 1651, the Dutch effort to prevent the leakage of cloves through Makassar was almost wholly successful. English trade in the port, now restricted to the export of benzoin and sandalwood, fell into decline. Correspondingly, we see a decline in trade between Coromandel and the Archipelago, with the combined English-Danish export of textiles to Makassar in 1646 being estimated at no more than 400 bales.[85] The English Company was left with little recourse other than to export iron, gunpowder and saltpeter to the region from Coromandel, to encourage such pockets of anti-Dutch sentiments as might exist.[86].

We see then that the success of the English in the south-east Asian branch of their Coromandel trade in the first half of the seventeenth century was not only limited, but of short duration. Besides southeast Asia, the English actively engaged in the export of Coromandel goods to a few other markets. In the case of the European market, one major effort was made in the early 1630s, when supplies of Gujarat textiles fell off sharply on account of the famine in that period. Between 1631 and 1635, the English Company's directors poured money into the Coromandel factories, with no significant effect on return cargoes to Europe. In return for some 400,000 *rials* sent on five ships to the Coast from England, the European market received no more than 5,400 *rials* worth of goods.[87]

[84] Bassett, 'English Trade', p. 12; also G.J. Knapp, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen: De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de bevolking van Ambon, 1656–1696*, Dordrecht, 1987, pp. 19–23, 25–7.

[85] Bassett, 'English Trade', pp. 20–1. There is also perceptible a revival in trade from Nagapattinam to Makassar by Portuguese private traders, on which see *AR*, VOC. 317, fl. 234, as also the detailed discussion below.

[86] These naturally continued in the region, albeit at a low key. For a general discussion of Dutch relations with regional powers, see Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century*, The Hague, 1981.

[87] Company to Agent and Factors at Masulipatnam, letter dated 27 October 1636, *EFI [1634–36]*, pp. 317–18. The ships from England to Coromandel included *Pearl* (a cargo worth 10,380 l.), *Swan* (a cargo worth 22,454 l.), *Jewel* (carrying 25,033 l. of

In contrast to the growth of Dutch exports of Coromandel textiles to Europe in the period up to 1650, English exports appear to have remained distinctly limited; such Indian textiles as were sent were almost exclusively those of Gujarat. Moreland notes that in 1638–9, of a total of 66,641 pieces of textiles reaching London, 18,225 were from Coromandel, but this was a highly exceptional year, and exports neither in the preceding decade nor in the following five years appear to have reached such levels.[88] It is only after 1646 that an upward trend is noticeable in the Coromandel-Europe textile trade on the part of the English, and even Moreland termed this the start of a 'new phase'. By 1658, following his calculations, Coromandel textiles formed a higher proportion of the English Company's European order than those of Surat, the two being respectively 84,000 and 63,500 pièces. The English order in 1658 of Coromandel goods for Europe is decomposed by him as shown in Table 4.5.[89] Since long-cloth was of a larger size than normal textiles, he calculates that 20,000 pieces were the equivalent of 50,000 pieces of other cloth, so that we have a total of 84,000 pieces. It is of some interest to compare this order with the European order of the VOC some five years earlier, in 1652 (See Table 4.6)[90]

There is every reason to believe then that the VOC supplied a larger proportion of the European market for Coromandel textiles than the English Company, particularly because the period from 1652–8 was, if anything, one of further expansion of trade on part of the Dutch. Thus, if we were to compare Dutch European orders of 1658 (instead of those of 1652) with the order list of the EIC for the corresponding year, the dominance of the VOC is likely to be more marked. Further, bearing in mind the fact that in the period up to 1646, English exports of Coromandel textiles to Europe reached significant dimensions only on the odd occasion, such as in 1639–40, there is good reason to cast doubt on Moreland's assertion (subsequently quoted approvingly by Glamann) that 'it was the English Company which opened the west European market to cotton fabrics'.[91] This was probably true of Gujarati textiles, but, as far as

goods), *Coaster* (with 11,000 l.) and *Swan* once again with 29,449 l. {1 l. = 4 *rials*}. For a comment on the textile trade to England in the period, see Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, pp. 197–8.

88 W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 128–31.

89 Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 132.

90 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1188, fls. 256–7. I have deliberately excluded such categories as *khasas*, *zanen*, *malmals* and *hamams* from the order-list, as they originate from Bengal.

91 K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620–1740*, p. 138.

Table 4.5. *English orders for Europe, 1658*

Long cloth (or Guinea Linen):	20,000 pieces.
Salampuris:	20,000 pieces.
Others:	14,000 pieces.
TOTAL:	54,000 pieces.

Table 4.6 *Dutch orders for Europe, 1652*

Guinea linen	12,000 pieces	(or 30,000 standard pieces)
Percallas	10,000 pieces	
Muris	12,000 pieces	
Salampuris	10,000 pieces	
Sailcloth	4,000 pieces	
Bethilles ternatanes	4,000 pieces	
Other bethilles	12,000 pieces	
Chiavenys	4,000 pieces	
Negro cloth	2,000 pieces	
Adathys	10,000 pieces	
Gingams	4,000 pieces	
Chialou gingams	4,000 pieces	
Catel gingams	500 pieces	
TOTAL:	106,500 pieces.	

the cottons of the coast were concerned, VOC trade in them to Europe far exceeded that of the English in the period up to 1650.

The case of west Asia is more ambiguous. While the English Coromandel establishment had, from as early as 1618, received a good proportion of its financial wherewithal via Surat, there is little evidence of shipping in the reverse direction in the 1620s. Besides, when such ships are encountered (in the 1630s), one is not sure whether their cargoes were intended for consumption in west Asia or were to be transshipped at Surat for Europe. At any rate, the trade to west Asia in Coromandel goods on the part of the EIC can scarcely have begun sooner than 1630. The first ships to make a voyage from the Coromandel factories in the direction of Surat and Persia were the *Mary* and *Exchange* in 1632; however, these were laden mostly with the freight-goods of Asian traders based at Masulipatnam and Bandar Abbas, and had little by way of cargo on Company account.[92] In contrast, in the 1640s, when shipping from Madras and Masulipatnam to Surat and the Persian Gulf continued, there is evidence of

[92] *Mary* at Gombroon Road to the Company, 12 October 1632, *EFI [1630–33]*, p. 236. For a summary list of the cargo, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, Dagh-Register Pulicat, fls. 276v–277.

fair-sized cargoes on Company account. The lading of the *Swan* and *Thomas* in 1638 is unknown, but later ships, such as the *Endeavour* in 1644–5, carried cargoes in the region of 20,000 to 25,000 *rials* on Company account to Persia.[93] Thus, while quantification proves difficult, there may be some reason to conclude that the VOC's export figure of Coromandel goods to Persia in about 1650 (which was in the region of 40,000 *rials*, or f. 100,000) is unlikely to have been exceeded by the English.[94]

In brief then, total English trade at Coromandel in the period 1611–50 rarely if ever exceeded a sixth, or at most one-fifth of that of the VOC. The sketchy nature of English records in this early period does not permit more than a partial reconstruction of total exports and imports, but the figures available are shown in Table 4.7.[95] What one gathers from these figures, incomplete as they are, as well as from the tonnage of shipping from year to year, is the following picture. Exports fluctuate through the 1620s at between 25,000 and 30,000 *rials*, reaching a peak in the late 1630s, and declining thereafter, to rise again in the last two years of the 1640s – when no cargo values are available but shipping tonnage increases significantly. Where imports are concerned, these tend to fluctuate far more on a year-to-year basis than do exports. It is noticeable however that these too reach a peak in the middle to late 1630s, and decline thereafter in the 1640s. It is only for a brief period in the late 1630s that English exports (at over f. 250,000) reach something like a half of VOC exports in the corresponding years from Coromandel. In the 1640s, in contrast, the English Company is barely able to raise 10–15 per cent of the export values of the Dutch. Between September 1644 and October 1645, regarded by English factors on the Coast as a rather good phase in their export trade, total English exports from Coromandel amounted to 102,000 *rials* (or f. 225,000), while in the same year Dutch exports amounted to f. 1,542,061.[96]

93 Pitt at Gombroon to the Company, 16 May 1645, *EFI [1642–45]*, p. 268.

94 This is particularly because in the same period, Muhammad Sayyid and other traders at Masulipatnam were investing heavily in the Persian trade. On this see Chapter 6. Also Breton etc. at Swally to the Adventurers of the 4th Joint Stock, 31 January 1649, *EFI [1646–50]*, p. 243.

95 These figures are calculated from individual cargo values reproduced in two series of documentation: (i) F.C. Danvers and W. Foster, eds., *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, 6 Volumes, London, 1896–1902; (ii) W. Foster, ed., *The English Factories in India.*

96 Thomas Ivy at Fort St George, Madras, to the Company, October, 1645, *EFI [1642–45]*, p. 287. The English figure comprises the cargoes of the ships *Swan, Endeavour, Seaflower* and *Advice.* The Dutch figure is from Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, p. 141.

Table 4.7. *English exports and imports from Coromandel, 1611–50*

Year	Exports (in *rials*)	Year	Imports (in *rials*)
1618	24,746	1618	32,000
1622	34,875	1619	55,960
1629	25,941	1622	26,740
1631	30,716	1623	34,543
1634	37,076 (+)	1624	72,000
1635	48,000	1625	34,333
1636	35,224	1626	52,000 (+)
1638	93,119 (+)	1633	89,816 (+)
1640	55,875	1634	111,407 (+)
1643	47,672	1636	200,000 (+)
1645	63,466	1640	121,155
1647	65,744	1642	69,160
1648	68,713	1644	53,834
		1647	47,000 (+)

Note: 1 *rial* = f. 2.5
Source: See note 95.

The inference to be drawn is quite clear; given the failure of the English in the period up to 1645 adequately to develop their European sales of Coromandel goods, English trade depended in large measure on the fate of the clove trade via Makassar. The upswing of Coromandel exports in the 1630s is seen to coincide with the upswing of clove procurement at this entrepôt, for consumption in Europe. Equally, the decline in the early 1640s is attributable to the loss of the clove trade, and a mild recovery became possible only in the last years of the 1640s, when strenuous efforts were made to develop textile sales in Europe.

Danish trade

The third significant Company to enter into the trade of the Coromandel coast before 1650 was the Danish Company [*Dansk-Ostindiske Kompagni*]. The Danish Company was formed under a royal charter from King Kristian IV, and was in large measure influenced by the early success of the VOC. Its charter, dated 17 March 1616, was to be valid for twelve years, and the structure of the company itself closely paralleled that of the VOC. Some three hundred stockholders pooled in their wealth, and a board of directors existed, though perhaps the role of the court was of rather greater importance than in the Dutch case. Of an initial capital

of 180,000 rix-dollars (or f. 450,000), 17,000 were put up by the King, and the rest by Danish and Norwegian towns, the Copenhagen bourgeoisie, the nobility and foreign (in particular Dutch) investors.[97] The first fleet of two men-of-war and three merchantmen left Copenhagen in August 1618 under the command of Ove Giedde, to seek out possibilities of trade in Ceylon, the Archipelago and in south-eastern India.

Though the expedition was, in theory, under Giedde's command, the experienced Roland Crappé was given opportunities to use his independent initiative. Thus, by late 1620, we find him at the court of the Nayaka of Tanjavur, where, despite Portuguese opposition, he succeeded in obtaining a far-reaching grant from Raghunatha Nayaka for the town of Tarangambadi (or Tranquebar), to the north of Nagapattinam.[98] The text of the agreement, dated 20 November 1620, also allowed the Danes to farm the revenue of a neighbouring village, and gave them the right to fortify Tranquebar, which they did by early 1621.[99] This fort, Dansborg, became in subsequent decades the real centre of Danish operations, particularly because early dreams of trade with Kandy yielded little by way of tangible results. When, in 1621, Crappé became overall commander of the Danish enterprise in Asia, he soon set about attempting to widen the trading network, trading both within the Bay of Bengal and outside it. The situation that confronted him was not an easy one. His capital was limited, and the shipping available to him at any given time was at best a fleet of three or four. In the Archipelago, Dutch and English entered into an uneasy truce, which broke down very soon, in 1623. The hostility shown by these Companies (and in particular the Dutch) towards other European Companies in Asia had been demonstrated clearly by the episode of a French attempt to trade on Coromandel in the period 1617–21.[100]

To begin with, the Danes opened up trade between the Coast and Tenasserim, thus coming directly in conflict with the Portuguese of Nagapattinam, their competitors on this line. Initially a direct trading

[97] On Danish trade in the period, see *inter alia* Jacques Macau, *L'Inde Danoise: La prémiere Compagnie (1616–1670)*, Aix-en-Provence, 1972, p. 7, *passim*; Kay Larsen, *De Dansk-Ostindiske Koloniers Historie*, 2 Volumes, Copenhagen, 1907–8, Volume I: Trankebar, pp. 13–14.

[98] For details, see J.H. Schlegel, *Sammlung zur Dänischen Geschichte*, Volume I, Copenhagen, 1773, *passim*.

[99] For the text of the grant, see Larsen, *Danske-Ostindiske Koloniers*, pp. 167–9, 'Naiken of Tanjaurs Firman (19 November 1620)'. Also R.C. Temple. et al., eds., *The Life of Jón Ólafsson*, Volume II, London, 1932, pp. 17–24.

[100] See Om Prakash, ed., *The Dutch Factories*, pp. 31–3.

venture, in later years this enterprise came to assume the form of a freight-trade, with the Danish Company capital involved being minimal.[101] It would appear that, from 1623–4, the link between Tranquebar and Makassar was opened up as well,[102] and, with the arrival of ships from Copenhagen at Tranquebar in April 1624, the Danish position, both in terms of capital and shipping, was considerably strengthened. Their ship *Vandhunden* returned from Makassar early in 1624 with some 40 *bahars* of cloves (19,200 Dutch ponds), and these were put on the Coromandel market, much to the chagrin of the VOC.[103] By late 1625, the Danes were in such a confident phase that the VOC Director on the coast, Marten Ysbrantsz remarked sarcastically that it seemed 'as if they wanted to buy up the whole world'.[104] In October of that year, a factory was set up at Masulipatnam, while at the same time two of the four ships the Danes possessed were sent to Bengal, to explore trade at Pipli and Balasore. The expedition began inauspiciously, with the loss of the *Jupiter* in a storm off Manikapatnam, with 50,000 *rials* worth of goods on board. Despite this setback, the Danes declared their intention to pursue trade with Makassar and Aceh, and bought a locally constructed vessel at Bengal to continue the freight trade to Tenasserim.[105]

The annual despatch of two ships from the coast factories to Makassar had become an institution by the late 1620s. However, between 1624 and 1630, Crappé received no ship or capital from Europe, leaving him to survive from the profits of trade on the intra-Asian network. No doubt the strain of operating under such conditions showed on the Danish enterprise. Between 1626 and 1628, relations between the Company and the Nayakas of Tanjavur steadily worsened, largely on account of the Danish failure to pay dues on the village they farmed.[106] The Danes were, as a consequence, forced to

[101] Larsen, *Dansk-Ostindiske Koloniers*, p. 22, mentions relations between Crappé and the 'Vicekongen' of Tenasserim, subordinate to the Ayutthaya ruler, as early as 1621. Initially, the Danes seem to have carried pepper procured at Tranquebar to Tenasserim.

[102] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1083, fls. 213–14, where it is mentioned that in April 1624, *Vandhunden* (in Dutch *Waterhond*) had just returned from Makassar to Tranquebar with 40 *bahars* cloves.

[103] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1083, fls. 213–14; Larsen, *De Dansk-Ostindiske Koloniers Historie*, pp. 23, 25.

[104] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, p. 113.

[105] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 176v; Kay Larsen, *De Dansk-Ostindiske Koloniers Historie*, II (De Bengalske Loger; Nikobarerne), p. 12.

[106] Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, pp. 113–14; Larsen, *Historie*, I, pp. 27–8; *AR*, OB. VOC. 1082, fls. 56–v.

turn for aid to their ostensible rivals, the VOC.[107] In 1628–9, they approached the VOC with an offer to sell Tranquebar fort to them, but this was turned down by Governor-General Coen. Notwithstanding Portuguese attempts to put in their own bids for the fort, (fomented in large measure by the Conde de Linhares, who had just arrived from Lisbon as viceroy of the *Estado*),[108] a compromise was finally struck in 1630, under which Achyutappa Chetti, a powerful merchant of the area, as well as a close associate of the VOC, agreed to finance the day-to-day running of the fort, and to garrison it with Dutch assistance.

Up to 1631, the Danish enterprise on Coromandel continued in the form described above.[109] Early in the year, at the end of January or in early February, a ship would be sent to Makassar, laden in part with goods collected at the Danish factories in Masulipatnam and Tranquebar, and in part with freight goods. The proportion that the latter category formed depended in good measure on the financial position of Crappé's enterprise in a given year. On the other hand, the annual voyages to Tenasserim continued until the early 1630s; here, the Danes had arrived at a working arrangement with the Portuguese settlers at Nagapattinam, so that they freighted their goods to Mergui, as well as on the odd occasion to Makassar.[110] The annual imports from Makassar continued to be impressive. In August 1628, *Christianshavn* returned from Makassar with 100 *bahars* of cloves, and an equal quantity of sandal, besides fourteen *bahars* nutmeg. VOC factors observed this enterprise with a mixture of outrage and curiosity, and finally concluded that the profits of the Makassar trade were in effect what enabled Crappé to keep his head above water, but that they were not sufficient to organise a cargo for Europe.[111]

By all accounts, however, the Danish were not wholly marginal in

[107] See the letters from Crappé to Marten Ysbrantsz., for example those of 1629, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1097, fl. 475; VOC. 1100, fl. 75. We may note too that information provided by Crappé to Ysbrantsz on the Pipli trade contributed to the VOC decision to enter Bengal trade, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fls. 15–16.

[108] On this, see *HAG*, Monções do Reino 13 A, fls. 1–2, 14, *passim*; also *AR*, OB, VOC. 1100, fls. 62–v, 81–2.

[109] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 176–v. The Dutch rather rudely described this form of trade in the following terms: 'In sum, they break much wind, achieve little and no return cargoes go to Denmark.' (*AR*, OB, VOC. 1090, fls. 247–v.).

[110] The Danes' freight-trade is mentioned in several places; see for example *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fls. 15, 29v–30. On the Portuguese response to Danish trade on this line, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1090, fl. 247v; *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 23, fl. 177, Livro 24 fl. 16.

[111] Thus Jacques Macau even doubts that as a whole the Danish enterprise yielded a profit, *L'Inde Danoise*, pp. 52–62.

the trade of Masulipatnam in the late 1620s, whether in the exercise of military power at sea, or even purely in commercial terms. Their trade in the period 1626–30 at Masulipatnam was worth some 8,000 to 10,000 *pagodas* annually (which is to say f. 40,000 to 50,000). While this may not appear a large sum in comparison with the Dutch, it is worth noting that English trade was of not much greater significance in the period.[112] In 1631, reinforcements finally arrived from Denmark, in the form of the ship *Fortuna*, which was promptly unloaded and sent on a freight voyage to Tenasserim.[113] The ill-luck that had dogged the Danes, in the loss of two ships earlier on, continued however, and the sister-ship of the *Fortuna, Flensborg*, was lost to the Portuguese off Kollam on its voyage from Denmark to Coromandel.[114] Still, the capital on the *Fortuna*, together with that on the *Caritas* (which arrived in June 1632 in Tranquebar) rejuvenated the Danish enterprise. In 1632, their imports of cloves from Makassar to the coast reached as much as 150,000 Dutch ponds and the relatively comfortable financial position enabled Crappé to finally send a ship back to Denmark; this was the *Christianshavn,* with a lading of 100 packs cotton yarn, 57,600 Dutch ponds pepper, thirty-six *bahar* saltpeter, and 48,000 ponds cloves, worth roughly f. 90,000 in all.[115] With a fleet comprising *Caritas*, *Fortuna* and a locally purchased ship *Nieuwe Bengala*, Crappé looked at last to have settled into a comfortable commercial groove. It was decided about this time to abandon the Tenasserim freight trade, and to instead concentrate on the Indonesian entrepôts that remained open to non-VOC trade: Aceh, Banten, Japara and Makassar. Once again, however, one finds ill-luck dogging the enterprise. *Caritas* and *Fortuna* were damaged in a storm off Masulipatnam late in 1632, forcing Crappé to borrow a ship for a voyage to Makassar.[116] While trade continued, it now entered a depressed phase for the Danes. In order to import their fifty-odd *bahars* of cloves, and smaller amounts of sandal, radix China and tortoise horn, the Danes became increasingly embroiled in debt. A single merchant, Qasim, at Makassar, was owed some 7,000 *pagodas*

[112] As we have seen, English trade in the period up to 1630 fluctuated in the main between 25,000 and 30,000 *rials*.

[113] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1103, fls. 134–40v.

[114] Though the Danes had reached a working arrangement with the Portuguese of Nagapattinam, the *Estado da Índia* continued to be hostile to them. See *AR*, OB, VOC. 1103, fls. 134–40v; *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 27, fl. 22. Also see note 109 *supra*.

[115] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1105, fls. 193–v; it is unclear whether the cargo was finally sent on the *Fortuna* or the *Christianshavn*. See also *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fls. 275–v.

[116] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fls. 282v–283. '... sal hij (Crappé) een nieuw schip van Miercamaldij (dat gemelten Moor voordesen meende naer Atchijn te seijnden) voor uijt binnen 10 a 12 daeghen naer Maccasser stieren'.

in 1634.[117] Nonetheless, in 1635 and 1636, they continued to import relatively large quantities of cloves into the Masulipatnam market, which, together with the English import from Sulawesi, proved an enormous embarrassment to the VOC.[118]

Crappé's governorship came to an end late in 1636, when he relinquished charge to Bernt Pessart, earlier a merchant of the VOC, and for a brief period a 'free merchant' licensed by the Dutch Company to trade privately within Asia.[119] During the fifteen years of his government (1621–36), Crappé had very little to show his stockholders at home. The enterprise in Asia, unsupported for years on end by cargoes from home, soon became quasi-autonomous, run on a scale comparable with that of a medium to large sized Asian merchant, with a fleet of three ships, and a capital that seldom exceeded f. 125,000. In fact, between 1623 and 1639, no more than thirteen vessels were sent from Denmark to Asian waters.[120] Given his limited financial and shipping resources, coupled with the difficulties of trade in south-east Asia under the shadow of the VOC, Crappé exploited what was apparently viewed as a relatively risky but potentially profitable trade route, that between Masulipatnam and Makassar. His annual imports of cloves from Indonesia, usually in the range of 50,000 Dutch ponds, were in effect what kept his enterprise above water, even if he was unable to actually produce a surplus that he could then despatch to Europe. The close link between the Makassar trade and the fate of the Danish trade becomes still clearer in the period of his successor, Pessart.

Through much of the period of his governorship, Crappé had played his Dutch card with great acuity, using in particular his friendship with the more important persons in the VOC's Coromandel hierarchy. Pessart, on the other hand, was at daggers drawn with his compatriots in VOC employ.[121] On his arrival from Denmark in

117 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1117, fls. 663–v.

118 The figures for 1635 and 1636 are contained in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1117, fls. 663–70 and OB, VOC. 1119, fls. 1150–1 respectively. The English on Coromandel were in the early 1630s greatly in admiration of the extent of Danish trade to Makassar. Thus, 'The Generall of the Danes has provided in Masulipatan another cargazon for Macassar. It is marvellous to see what great benefitt that trade has produced unto him ...'. Armagon to Bantam, 24 December 1631, *EFI [1630–33]*, p. 184.

119 Larsen, *Historie*, I, p. 30; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fls. 339–40, 'Reeckeninge van de vrijlieden capiteelen met de schepen Prins Willem ende Rotterdam ontfangen' (1633) includes goods belonging to Pessart worth 418 *pagodas*.

120 See Ole Feldbaek, 'The organization and structure of the Danish East India, West India and Guinea Companies in the 17th and 18th Centuries', in L. Blussé and F. Gaastra, eds., *Companies and Trade*, Leiden, 1981, especially pp. 138–41.

121 See Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, I, pp. 681–2; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fl. 1150.

September 1636, he brought a capital worth some 33,000 *rials* in silver, besides sizeable amounts of quicksilver, vermilion and other assorted goods.[122] Since the trade to Europe had been neglected, Crappé left for Denmark some months thereafter on the yacht *St Anna*, arriving in Copenhagen in January 1638, with a cargo of 145,000 ponds cloves, 20,000 ponds sappan-wood, and few other goods of consequence.[123] The only Coromandel goods that were laden were saltpeter, and a few packs of Guinea linen. Pessart, as soon as he assumed charge of the enterprise, made his intentions clear. To begin with, he wrote letters to the Viceroy of the *Estado da Índia*, offering to supply Portuguese fortresses in Ceylon and at Melaka with rice, and other essentials, if in exchange he were allowed to trade at Goa and in other ports.[124] In addition, he entered heavily into debt at Masulipatnam to finance a series of new ventures, and even purchased a ship in Bengal to this end. This ship, probably the one VOC factors called *Corsoer*, was sent to Banten with some 6,800 *pagodas* worth of textiles, while late in 1637, Pessart despatched the yacht *St Jacob* on an immensely complex mission.[125] The yacht was to proceed from Coromandel to Banten, from there to Makassar and Solor, return to Banten, then proceed to Manila, where Pessart hoped to persuade the Spanish governor to permit the Danes to trade. From Manila, the yacht was to return to the Coast. The Manila enterprise appears to have fallen through, but, in the next year, we are afforded a rare glimpse into the Danes' own records, from some papers lifted by the Dutch from a Danish vessel near Melaka.[126] This shows that, in mid 1638, the yachts *Corsoer* and *Souby* brought some 39,700 *rials* worth of goods from Coromandel to the Banten factory, and carried in addition textiles worth 22,000 *rials* for Makassar. On their return to Banten from Makassar in June 1639, they carried a cargo worth 29,709 *rials* including fifty-eight *bahars* cloves and 1,319 *picol* sugar (possibly of Philippine provenance) to Coromandel, which was supplemented by goods from Banten worth another 38,464 *rials*. With English exports on Coromandel at 35,000 *rials* in 1636 and 55,000 *rials* in 1640, the point to be stressed is that, as mentioned

122 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fls. 1150–1.
123 *AR*, VOC. 316, fl. 191.
124 See *HAG*, Monções do Reino 21 B, fls. 517–v, as also numerous references in P.S.S. Pissurlencar, ed., *Assentos do Conselho do Estado [1634–1643]*, Goa, 1954.
125 See *AR*, OB, VOC. 1127, fls. 214v–215; also OB, VOC. 1132, fls. 104–11, 'Instructie voor de Hr Hermaen Claesz. oppercoopman vant jacht St. Jacob gaende van hier naer Trangebary Bantam Maccassaer Solor en Manilha'.
126 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1132, fls. 124–34, 'Copie van den Deensen negotieboecken bij onsen oppercoopman Cornelis van Samen tot Bantam geformeert'.

earlier, purely in terms of value of trade, the Danes on Coromandel were by no means as unimportant as is commonly supposed.[127]

In contrast to the English however, Danish trade was built on far more fragile foundations. By 1638, Pessart's debts at Masulipatnam amounted to some 35,800 *pagodas* (or f. 161,100) at 2.5 to 3 per cent interest a month, and his creditors were clamouring for their money.[128] The failure of an effort to partake of the freight-trade from Masulipatnam to Persia in 1639–40 left the Danes still worse off. In surety for Danish debts, first Pessart and later his family were held hostage at Masulipatnam.[129] The arrival of a long-awaited fleet from Denmark, comprising two ships – *Christianshavn* and *Solen* – in 1640, eased the pressure somewhat. Financially, the solvency of the Danes improved, while on the other hand Pessart's family were released by local authorities when the Danish *Solen* attacked and captured a ship of Golconda's *Sar-i-Khail* at Masulipatnam road.[130] Immediately after this incident the *Solen* was sent to Makassar, and this was to be the last profitable voyage for the Danes on this route. As we have already discussed in our section on the English Company, the Makassar market collapsed in 1642–3, with the Dutch finally crushing all centres of clove 'smuggling'. At the same time, with the Ten Years' Luso-Dutch Truce coming into effect in 1642, Portuguese trade to Makassar from Nagapattinam revived, so that the procurement of sandal, and of re-exports from Macau were not sufficient to support the textile import by English, Danes *and* private Portuguese from Coromandel. The Danes from 1642 were a great source of amusement to the Dutch, who now regarded the collapse of that Company as only a matter of time. When news trickled into Batavia in 1642 of the arrival of the *Solen* at Banten, en route from Coromandel to Makassar, we see the Governor-General of the VOC remarking in surprise to the Coast factors, 'It is strange how these

[127] Of course, this study is handicapped by the fact that Dutch and English records (particularly the former) are being used to study the Danes, rather than the papers of the Danish Company itself. These alone would have allowed for a complete evaluation of the quantitative dimensions of Danish trade, but they are lost, so that Danish historians are left to work with 'mainly government sources dealing with these companies' (private communication from Professor Ole Feldbaek, University of Copenhagen, dated 19 October 1987).

[128] For a list of Danish debts at Masulipatnam, see the letter from Johan de Meere and Arnold Heussen at Masulipatnam to Anthonio van Diemen at Batavia, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1127, fls. 124v–125.

[129] Larsen, *Historie*, I, p. 32. 'Ogsaa Logen i Masulipatnam gik tabt; al Kompagniets Ejendom der i Staden blev beslaglagt af den golkondiske Statholder (i.e. the *Mir Jumla*) til sikkerhed for nogle mohrske kobmaends Fordringer paa Pessart'.

[130] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1138, fl. 414; Larsen, *Historie*, I, p. 30; *EFI [1642–45]*, p. 42.

people go on continuing with their affairs'.[131] As Pessart's troubles with Makassar grew, they did not come singly. By 1645, Danish trade in Asia was effectively written off by the Dutch, who noted that – in addition to everything else – the wars with Sweden would mean an end to further arrivals of capital from Copenhagen.[132] Further, Makassar was at this time closed to the clove trade, so that profits on this line could no longer sustain the Danes; besides, after 1640, there had been no further reinforcements from home. One suspects that it was desperation at this impasse which prompted Pessart, now at loggerheads with this deputy Willom Leyel, to think of a venture to Japan, depending on his Dutch origins to carry him through, Japan being closed to all Europeans save the VOC.[133] As it happened, the Dutch at Batavia got wind of his intention and impounded his ship in 1645, then pressurising Pessart into carrying on to Manila with a cargo ostensibly his own, but in fact that of the Dutch Company. The scheme ended in complete disaster, when Pessart was killed on one of the islands off Manila, and the ship, *Det Gode Haab*, confiscated in Manila by the Spanish authorities.[134]

At the end of our period then, in 1649, the Danish enterprise was close to folding up. Leyel had handed over charge of Fort Dansborg to Paul Hansen Korsør (earlier Danish factor at Makassar) and is to be encountered in Banten, undecided on whether to return to Coromandel or to proceed to Denmark. He had been forced from financial need to sell one of his ships to the Sultan of Banten, and had just returned from Makassar, where he found the textile market flooded by the English and Dutch Companies, and by Portuguese private traders.[135] This depressed state of affairs continued even after his eventual departure for Copenhagen, and in 1650 the first Danish Company was officially wound up. The next two decades are punctuated only by the arrival of the odd ship from Denmark at Tranquebar. We are informed by Raychaudhuri that in the 1660, the

[131] *AR*, BUB., VOC. 866, fl. 438. Also see *AR* BUB, VOC. 872, fl. 279.

[132] *AR*, VOC. 317, fl. 35v. The death in 1648 of King Kristian IV, a major patron and financial support to the Company, was a further blow, as his successor did not show much interest in continuing to back this unprofitable venture. See Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade*, p. 213.

[133] On this incident, see F.S. Gaastra, 'Merchants, middlemen and money: aspects of the trade between the Indonesia Archipelago and Manila in the 17th century', in G. Schutte and H. Sutherland, eds., *Papers of the Dutch-Indonesian Historical Conference*, Lage Vuursche, 23–7 June 1980, pp 301–14.

[134] Gaastra, 'Merchants'; Larsen, *Historie*, I, pp. 34–5.

[135] Batavia to Coromandel, *AR*, BUB, VOC. 873, fl. 120.

Danes, ' ... with occasional assistance from Europe ... continued to send their ships to Macassar and Japan, and later to Bantam and Manila as well'.[136]

Non-company Coromandel trade, 1600–50: introduction

In the first half of the seventeenth century, it is possible to examine the trade of the Coromandel coast at a greater level of detail than before, on account of the advent of the north-west European trading Companies. Their arrival in this period had certain implications of importance for commerce as a whole. On the one hand, these Companies succeeded in developing a European market for Coromandel textiles, building on the somewhat fragile foundations that had been created in the last quarter of the sixteenth century by the Portuguese. The Companies also quickly came to acquire a substantial role in the trade in Coromandel textiles with south-east Asia, and an examination of the order lists of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) as well as of bills of lading makes it clear that a large proportion of the south-east Asian market, particularly the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago, had fallen into Dutch Company hands by 1650. The other companies too managed to find a place in the trade to south-east Asia, the English through their trade with Banten, Aceh, the ports of the west coast of Sumatra, Banjarmassin and Makassar, and the Danes principally using the trade with Makassar.

How did non-Company trade, the trade of Asians, Portuguese and Luso-Indians, from Coromandel fare in this period? To answer this question, within Coromandel itself, one would need to consider two separate sub-regions or areas, namely northern Coromandel (the trade of which centred around Masulipatnam), and southern and central Coromandel (which involved a series of ports extending from Pulicat to Nagapattinam). This is partly because the categories of textiles carried from these two regions were different, and also because – as we shall see ahead – they represented the spheres of action of different mercantile groups.

Turning to the southern section of the coast, the area was dominated in 1600 by the important port of Nagapattinam in the Kaveri delta. A port extensively dominated by Indo-Portuguese and

136 Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, pp. 114–15; Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade*, pp. 213–14; Larsen, *Historie*, I, pp. 38–40.

Muslim merchants, the trading links of Nagapattinam embraced a wide area within the Bay of Bengal. There was considerable trade from the port to Bengal (principally to Hughli and Chittagong), to Martaban, to the Malay Peninsula ports of Ujangselang, Trang, Kedah and Perak, as well as to Aceh and the ports of the Sunda Straits. Many of these navigational lines were, at least in theory, monopolies granted by the Portuguese Crown to individuals. However, as an abundance of documentation testifies, these monopolies were rarely effective in fact, becoming less and less so as the seventeenth century wore on.[137] Direct trade between Nagapattinam and Melaka was, under this system, forbidden in theory, since such a voyage would infringe upon the monopoly right of the concessionary who navigated from São Tomé de Meliapor to Melaka. In fact, from the late 1580s, such voyages were occasionally permitted, but usually on account of strategic considerations, such as when Melaka was running desperately short of rice, and such ships were, at least in theory, to carry only supplies.[138] Clustered around Nagapattinam were other satellite ports, which served as sources of textiles, besides playing an independent role in the coastal – as opposed to maritime – trade. Among these were Porto Novo, Devanampattinam, Karikal etc. Further to the north – and we are by now in central Coromandel – São Tomé de Meliapor comprised another centre of navigation and maritime trade, though clearly of lesser importance than Nagapattinam. Trade from São Tomé was principally along two lines; there was the annual carrack to Melaka, richly laden with a wide variety of textiles from diverse producing areas along the coast, and there was the trade to Pegu, in constant jeopardy on account of political instability in late sixteenth century Burma, as well as on account of the fluctuating relations between the *Estado da Índia* and the powers of the lower Irrawaddy valley. The value of trade on these two commercial lines may be estimated for the last decade of the sixteenth century at around 350,000 *xerafins*, being roughly equal on each one of these routes.[139]

Shipping from São Tomé constantly encountered difficulties, and

137 As evidence from the *venda geral* of 1614 shows, for which see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 38, fls. 334–5. The document shows the market value of certain concessions in 1614, which can be seen to be considerably lower than the values stated c. 1580, reproduced elsewhere in this chapter (on p. 147).

138 *BNL*, Lisbon, Fundo Geral, Codex 1979, Part 1 (the codex is in 7 parts).

139 The value of trade on the Pegu route is estimable from Mendes da Luz, ed., 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas'; that to Melaka from *De Reis van Joris van Spilbergen naar Ceylon, Atjeh en Bantam, 1601–04*, pp. 66–71, 81–2.

was, by its very nature, fragile. The port of Pulicat, located to the north and by 1600 no more than a subsidiary source of textiles, with very little by way of independent navigation on the high-seas, was in many ways its *alter ego*, since ships from São Tomé had to shelter at Pulicat during the north-east monsoon. The description left by Cesare Federici of loading and ùnloading at São Tomé makes interesting reading.

It is a marvelous thing [he writes] to them which have not seene the lading and unlading of men and merchandize in S. Tomé as they do: it is a place so dangerous, that a man cannot bee served with small barkes, neither can they doe their businesse with the boates of their shippes, because they would be beaten in a thousand pieces, but they make certaine barkes (of purpose) high, which they call Masadie, they be made up of little boards; one board being sowed to another with small cordes, and in this order they are made. [140]

Such a mode of transport from ship to shore was both clumsy and time-consuming, particularly since, as he puts it, 'sometimes there are some of them that are overthrown, but there can be no great losse, because they lade but a little at a time.' It seems to have been the practice around 1600 (if we are to believe the journal of Paulus van Soldt's voyage) for ships from São Tomé to anchor up the river of Pulicat, a practice which sheltered them from the winter monsoon, as well as facilitating lading later in the year.[141] This dependence on Pulicat is to be stressed, since it explains in large measure two important phenomena observed in the early seventeenth century: first, the rapidity with which São Tomé crumbled as a commercial town in the period, and secondly, the obsessive concern of Portuguese officialdom in the same period with the 'Empresa de Paleacate' – the attempt to dislodge the Dutch from Pulicat.[142] It may be said with some justice that the Dutch Company by acquiring a fort at Pulicat in

[140] 'The voyage of master Caesar Frederick unto East India and beyond the Indies, Anno 1563', in Richard Hakluyt, ed., *The Principal Navigations,* Volume III, pp. 229–30.

[141] Paulus van Soldt's voyage, in Isaac Commelin, *Begin ende Voortgangh,* Volume II, Verhael XII, pp. 62–3.

[142] This is discussed at length in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'The "Pulicat Enterprise": Luso-Dutch conflict in south-eastern India, 1610–1640', *South Asia* (New Series), Volume IX (2), 1986; see also P.S.S. Pissurlencar, 'Rivalidade luso-holandesa na Índia durante a Dominação Filipina', in *Boletim do Instituto Vasco da Gama,* Nos. 47 and 49. For another view of the 'Pulicat enterprise' and Luso-Dutch conflict in the period, see the study of Maria Manuela Sobral Blanco [Velez], 'Os Holandeses e o Império Português do Oriente [1595–1641]', baccalaureate thesis, Faculty of Letters, Universidade de Lisboa, 1974, Volume I.

1612 simultaneously had its hand on the throat of São Tomé (to modify Tomé Pires's picturesque phrase).[143]

Finally, in northern Coromandel – after one passed the Motupalli area and the subsidiary port of Nizamapatnam – there was the third major nucleus of Coromandel trade, which is to say the port of Masulipatnam. As has been discussed, Masulipatnam had, over the last quarter of the sixteenth century, built up extensive trading links on the littoral of the Bay of Bengal – principally with Aceh, the Malay Peninsula ports, Pegu, Arakan and Bengal. Further, the last decade of the sixteenth century saw the extension of Masulipatnam's trade to the Red Sea as well, this being a traffic in both commodities and pilgrims. The shipowners of Masulipatnam were principally Persians, and belonged to an interesting commercial-cum-politically oriented group; for instance, in Mughal India, one finds a small but significant Persian segment at the court.[144] Their role was of greater import in the Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda, which looked to Persia as a cultural pole of attraction, and where this group came to form one of the three major factions in court and *elite* politics, together with the Dakhnis (or local converts), and the Habshis (the Abyssinian Muslims). When one looks to the major ports of both Bijapur and Golconda in the early seventeenth century, the dominance of Persian shipowners, more often than not also participants in local administration as well as in court politics, is striking. Elsewhere on the Bay of Bengal littoral, most conspicuously in the kingdom of Arakan in upper Burma and in the Ayutthaya kingdom (in modern day Thailand), these Persians – often arriving from Masulipatnam – were important, and sometimes even dominant in the court and central administration.[145]

But in addition to these Persians, there were other shipowners based in Masulipatnam – even if not always permanent or long-term residents. The Sultan of Aceh and the Kings of Pegu had, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, traded with their own shipping in the port. Other merchants based at Mrauk-u, the port and principal city of Arakan, traded there as well; among them was the important

[143] Pires's remark was of course that he who has Melaka has his hand on the throat of Venice.

[144] See M. Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire: Awards of ranks, offices and titles to the Mughal nobility, 1574–1658*, Delhi, to be read together with his earlier work *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Aligarh, 1966.

[145] This appears to have been a late seventeenth century phenomenon though. See, for Ayutthaya, Jean Aubin, 'Les Persans au Siam sous le règne de Narai [1656–1688]', and other references in note 43 above.

trader Haji Baba and his son.[146] The role of these 'partner port' traders was to grow over the half century under consideration, and this development forms one of the major threads of this chapter. Finally, the Sultan of Golconda – at the turn of the seventeenth century Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah – was himself a participant in a limited sense. The ship sent on the Mecca run, constructed at the Narsapurpettai dockyard to the north or Masulipatnam, is almost invariably referred to as 'the King's ship', though the Dutch documents of the early decades of the seventeenth century do hint at the fact that, at least in the case of Golconda, the ship was at times constructed as well as financed by certain influential courtier-traders in the name of the Sultan.[147] A firmer conclusion awaits better documentation on the issue.

The trade of Nagapattinam, 1600–30

Any examination of the fate of Asian traders operating from southern and central Coromandel in the first three decades of the seventeenth century must of necessity centre around the port of Nagapattinam, since it so clearly dominates the maritime scene in this period. To anticipate our discussion, what we are about to see in this period is the continuing strength of the traders settled in this port, both Indo-Portuguese and Muslim, and also the rise of other smaller ports to the north as centres of maritime trade, albeit on a smaller scale than Nagapattinam. These ports include (in the period up to 1630) Porto Novo, Pulicat and Puducheri; and in the two decades following Devanampattinam as well. The period also sees the rapid decline of the port of São Tomé de Meliapor, a fact very much in evidence by about 1630. It would be clear from the brief summary above, as also from the earlier literature on Coromandel trade in the seventeenth century (notably the works of Tapan Raychaudhuri, S. Arasaratnam and Joseph J. Brennig),[148] that the effect of Company trade and seapower on the trade of other entities is of some importance in this period. One cannot conclude from the writings of these authors

[146] The earliest reference I have been able to locate on Haji Baba is in the journal of Pieter Willemszoon 'Floris', for which see W.H. Moreland, ed., *Peter Floris: His Voyage to the East Indies*, p. 14.

[147] This is discussed in Chapter 6, below, in the section dealing with the Persian Mir Kamaluddin.

[148] Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*; Joseph Brennig, 'The textile trade of 17th century north Coromandel', and numerous articles of S. Arasaratnam such as 'De VOC in Ceylon en Koromandel in de 17de en 18de eeuw', in M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz. ed., *De VOC in Azië*.

though that Company trade was a damper, pure and simple, on other traders. On the contrary, there are even traders, who rise to importance under the shadow of the Companies, and by manipulating the Europeans in an advantageous fashion. Equally, the Companies – like the Portuguese before them – often have a diversionary or re-orientating effect on trade through their policies, instead of necessarily causing a decline *on the whole.*

In the case of Nagapattinam, we have already noted the trading links between this port and diverse ports on the Malay Peninsula, in the northern Bay (particularly Hughli and Chittagong), and with Goa, connected by the annual coastal *cafila.* It has also been noted that trading links with Aceh in northern Sumatra play a part of some importance in Nagapattinam's trade towards the end of the sixteenth century. The settlement of the Portuguese at Nagapattinam commenced – to recapitulate briefly – around 1530, and this centre grew in size and importance over the next three-quarters of a century. In this period of growth, as in the half century 1600–50, there were some differences between the settlers in the port and the local power, the Nayaka rulers of Tanjavur, some 80 kilometres to the west. In the 1560s, the Portuguese of the port entered in open conflict with the Nayaka's forces and were expelled briefly, but returned shortly thereafter early in the 1570s. A Portuguese chronicler writing in 1581 tells us that 'on coming to be reconciled with the Nayaka, there returned to Nagapattinam many noble men, and soldiers, with their wives and families'.[149] It appears clear enough that these settlers were principally interested in the rice trade with Jaffna and Malabar to begin with but came, soon enough, to build up the extensive maritime connections we have mentioned earlier.[150] They were not alone in this, as the Marakkayar traders of the same area also pursued the same set of activities, so that there developed a symbiotic relationship between the two, with the mutual freighting of space on board one another's ships. With the development of long distance shipping, many of the navigation lines came to be absorbed within the Portuguese Crown's system of concessions as well.

The Portuguese settlement at Nagapattinam was, right from its inception, separated and distinct from the settlements of the Hindus and Muslims resident there. The town was located on the Uppanar,

149 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalesas', p. 79. 'E vindose depois a Reconciliar com elle, tornarão a habitar em Negapatão muitos homẽs nobres soldados com suas molheres e familia. . . .'.

150 António Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', in Bragança Pereira, ed., *Arquivo Português Oriental*, Parte II, pp. 1–2.

one of the distributary branches of the Kaveri, which was however narrow and somewhat difficult to navigate. It was only in the last decade of the sixteenth century that the Portuguese settlement came to acquire the character that one observes in the watercolour sketch by Pedro Barreto de Resende, made *circa* 1635.[151] Until the 1590s, the Portuguese had lived in relatively rude constructions, thatched with straw. With the growing prosperity of trade from the port, the grandeur of its construction (in so far as the whitewashed austerity of Iberian tradition would allow) increased apace. To understand the character and layout of the town, one can turn to António Bocarro's description which accompanies the Barreto de Resende sketch mentioned above. In the 1630s the town had some 500 households of Portuguese, *mestiços*, and native Christians. In addition, there were the Muslim and Hindu settlements, as earlier mentioned. Within the Portuguese quarter, those capable of bearing arms are estimated in the same period at around 2,000 in number. The habitations were of stone and lime, with tiled roofs – in the classic Portuguese colonial pattern. Most of the houses were constructed with a quadrangular ground plan, around a central garden or arbour. The river Uppanar followed a semi-circular course before entering the Bay of Bengal, so that entering it from the sea, one proceeded first south-west and later, after a bend, in the north-easterly direction. The Portuguese town lay in the elbow or semi-circle mentioned above, to the north of the bend in the river and surrounded by it on three sides. To the north, where the Portuguese town ended, there began the 'native town', the southern limit of which was roughly demarcated by the Nilayadakshi Amman temple, and overlooked the sea on the eastern side. While the Hindu settlement can be fairly closely identified with the area known in more recent times as *Papancheri*, it is the area of residence of the Muslim seafaring merchants that presents something of a puzzle. However, given the fact that neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch documents of the period ever speak of Naguru, the site of the Andavar Dargah, and an important centre for Coromandel's Muslim communities, it is tempting to conclude that what was referred to as Nagapattinam's 'Moorish quarter' was in fact Naguru, 8 kilometres to the north. If this were indeed the case, the

[151] The Barreto de Resende sketch of Nagapattinam is not available with the version of the Bocarro manuscript preserved at the *BP e AD*, Évora, Codex CXV/2-1, on which the Bragança Pereira edition is based. It can however be consulted in at least two other versions: (i) *BM*, Sloane Mss. 197, fls. 324v–325, (ii) *BNL*, Lisbon, Mss. Iluminado No. 140, fl. 242B. Also see, for a description of life in Nagapattinam, *BM*, London, Additional Mss. 9853, fls. 27v–53v, 143–v.

Muslim merchants – as distinct from the residents of the Portuguese quarter – are likely to have used the other river (a branch of the Kolladam) farther to the north, since it was broader and deeper than that of Nagapattinam proper (the Uppanar), permitting ships of over 300 tons burthen to enter at high tide.

When one looks at the structure of the Portuguese quarter, *circa* 1630, of particular interest are the large number of churches and religious institutions therein. The religious orders resident within the town included the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and Jesuits, and in addition there were the secular clergy of the See. Another powerful institution with religious overtones was the Holy House of Mercy (*Santa Casa de Misericórdia*) which makes its presence felt from the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The wealth of some of these churches was proverbial in the period, a remarkable fact, given that they (unlike those of São Tomé) were not founded on the largesse of the Crown and *Estado*, but on contributions from local residents.

The undoubted wealth of the residents of the port came above all from commerce, and this brought them in conflict with the *Estado da Índia*. We have already noted that voyages from Nagapattinam to various ports, such as Martaban, Mergui, Ujangselang, and Kedah were, from the last quarter of the sixteenth century, Crown monopolies granted to specific individuals. This system of monopolistic concessions was notoriously problematic; there were numerous claimants, whose claims had to be chronologically ordered and met, so that precedence was assured to the one with the earliest dated royal grant. On some occasions, already from 1585, we see the captains-designate of Nagapattinam successfully suing for one or the other voyage originating from that port as a perquisite.[152] This sort of grant was however on an individual basis; unlike the captains of Melaka, those of Nagapattinam could not claim these voyages as a right of office. In theory, the post of captain of Nagapattinam was not remunerated. But there were monetary gains to be made. In addition to the concessions received from time to time, the captains received *manyam* from the Nayakas of Tanjavur. One of these was the

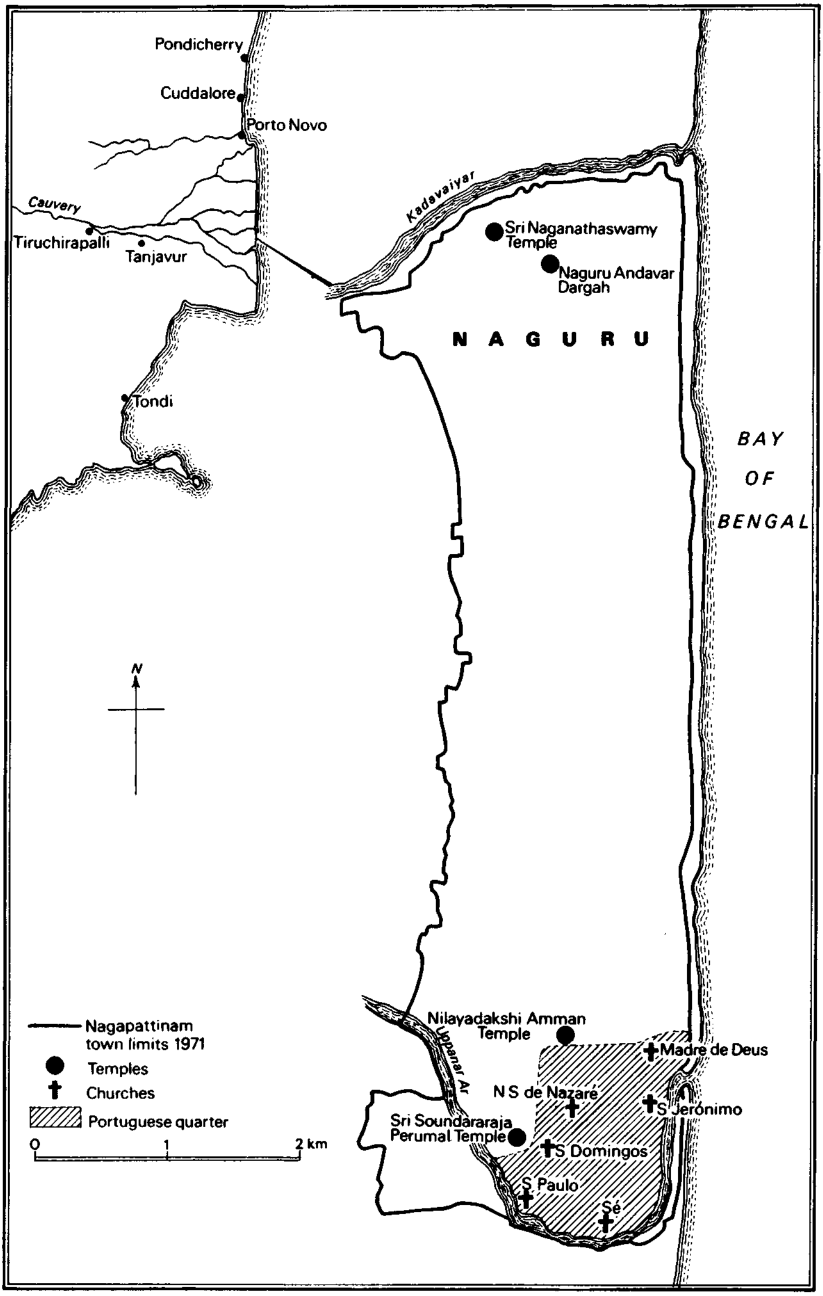
[152] *Vide* the *alvarás* of the Governor Fernão de Albuquerque, April 1620, and other documentation published in Cunha Rivara, ed., *APO*, Fascicule IV, Document 237 (pp. 960–1), Document 261 (p. 979), and Documents 514 and 515, pp. 1203–6; also R.A. de Bulhão Pato et. ed., *Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, 5 Volumes, Lisbon, 1880–1935, Volume III, pp. 66–7, dated 20 February 1614; finally, see *BNL*, Lisbon, Fundo Geral, Mss. 71, No. 9, grant to João Rebelo de Azevedo dated 8 February 1585.

alienated revenue of a neighbouring village, worth 1,400 *xerafins*, another a portion of customs-house revenue, worth 200 *xerafins*, and finally, permission from the Nayaka – whose officials controlled Nagapattinam's customs house – for a limited amount of trade on account of the captain (probably on the coastal trade network) free of customs.[153]

The concessions mentioned above had already been in existence from the 1570s. The last decade of the sixteenth century saw the *Estado* trying to tighten up still further on commerce from Nagapattinam. Customs at Melaka were raised, and an export duty levied on goods destined for Coromandel, where earlier only an import tax had existed. The acquisition of Siriam early in the seventeenth century prompted greater control over trade with the upper Malay Peninsula and lower Burma. Ships were asked to put in obligatorily at Syriam and pay duties there, when in the neighbourhood, and a similar hard line was laid down with respect to trade with Perak, and ships destined for that port were asked to pay the Melaka toll. Not even the coastal trade escaped attention; ships from Nagapattinam to Negombo were told to pass through Colombo and pay duties there.[154] This rash of ambitious legislation, implying an ever greater set of claims backed by a stagnant machinery for enforcement could only have widened the gap between legislation and reality. The breakdown of the concession system, the centre piece of the structure as it stood, took time, however. There was an important catalytic force aiding the process though, and this was the Dutch Company. From as early as 1603, Dutch shipping had raided and profited from the Portuguese trade emanating from the coast, both from São Tomé and Nagapattinam. Those who suffered were frequently not Portuguese or even *mestiço*, but persons who had freighted space aboard their ships. Not illogically, one of the prime targets for the VOC was shipping between São Tomé and Melaka, and we have noted the capture made as early as 1602 by Spilberghen on a privateering expedition. In

[153] António Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte II, pp. 2–3. We have, from 1658, details of ten villages – to wit, Puttur, Muttam, Poruvalacheri, Antonipet, Karuveppangade, Alinjjilamangalam, Sangamangalam, Niruttinamangalam, Manjakolle and Nariyangudi – which the Nayaka of Tanjavur made over to the VOC, stating that these formerly belonged to the Portuguese captain and churches. See K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'Two Negapatam grants from the Batavia Museum', in *South India and South-east Asia: Studies in their History and Culture*, reprint Mysore, 1978, pp. 200–2. Finally, on the later administration of these villages, *AR*, Hoge Regering te Batavia, 1.04.17, No. 346.

[154] On the Syriam customs-house, see *HAG*, Monções do Reino, No. 12, fl. 8; also *Documentos Remetidos da India*, Volume II, pp. 394–5; on Negombo see Cunha Rivara ed., *APO*, Fascicule VI, Document 85, pp. 828–9, Document 248, p. 970.



Map 7 Portuguese Nagapattinam, 1600–40

theory, and under the system of concessions, only the concession holder of the *Viagem do Coromandel* (Coromandel Voyage) was entitled to make this trip, usually in a large carrack laden from São Tomé. As early as the 1580s, when Melaka was desperately short of food-supplies, exceptions had been made, and the occasional small craft from Nagapattinam, laden with rice, permitted to go to Melaka. This being viewed as a response to an extraordinary circumstance, a licence had to be sought (probably by the Melaka *Câmara*) from the viceroy for the purpose.

After 1600, with trade between São Tomé and Melaka becoming irregular, Nagapattinam shippers began to encroach on this trade. Several shippers sought permission from the viceroy for this, and they were granted it. The captains of Melaka, pleading strategic necessity, attempted as well to carve out for themselves a share in the trade. In October 1606, the Dutch Company's vessels captured a galleon *Santo António*, belonging to André Furtado de Mendonça, off Nicobar. The ship was on its way from Nagapattinam to Melaka, and had on board, besides the captain Ambrosio Serrão Pereira, the captain of Chaul, Dom Luís Lobo, and two of his nephews. This ship did carry a good deal of rice – 800 *khandis* to be exact – but also had on board 290 bales of textiles.[155] It is of some interest that, as in the earlier capture of 1602, in addition to sixty-odd 'persons of quality', there were some 700 persons found on board. Nor was this an exception. Dutch captures in May-June 1603 had included a smaller ship, also *Santo António*, bound from Nagapattinam to Melaka, and thence to Manila.[156] In the course of time, however, such trade was looked at askance, since it went against the concession system, which would thus cease to have meaning. As a consequence, in July 1611, the Viceroy Rui Lourenço de Távora rescinded all such extraordinary licences, declaring that no one 'from the lowermost end of the coast to Masulipatnam' could sail to Melaka, save those who had concessions from the Crown. In the same year, a warning was issued to Nagapattinam's settlers (on the basis of a complaint made by its captain António Coelho de Vilha), stating that only the concession holder could make the voyage to Tavoy and Martaban from Nagapattinam. All those who would contravene this order – as had

[155] *Begin ende Voortgangh*, II, Verhael XII. 'De tweede voyagie naer Oost Indien...', pp. 72–3.

[156] *Ibid.*, Verhael XI. Wijbrand van Warwijk's voyage, pp. 20–1.

Table 4.8. *Sale of concession voyages, c. 1614*

Voyage	Buyer	Price [3 Voyages]
São Tomé-Melaka	Simão Teixeira	12,010 *xerafins*
São Tomé-Pegu	Henrique de Souza	1,100 *xerafins*
Nagapattinam-Trang	Martim Cota	1,120 *xerafins*
Nagapattinam-Mergui	António Gonçalves	1,205 *xerafins*

frequently been done lately – would lose the ship and all the goods involved.[157]

Do these strictures in fact demonstrate that the concession system was *de facto* already in a state of collapse, and that free-for-all was ensuing in trade from Nagapattinam? This seems less than certain. Our evidence suggesting the continuance of the system in some form comes from the accounts of the *venda geral* or 'General Auction' undertaken in 1614 of all public offices in the *Estado da Índia*, and of all concessions for voyages. This auction was conceived of as an emergency fund-raising measure to fight the Dutch, and purchasers were largely those old India hands, who would not in the normal course of things have received these benefices. The sales are of some interest of our discussion (see Table 4.8).[158]

The figures tend to present a mixed picture; there are lines of navigation in which the concession continues to have some value, while there are others where there are clearly no takers. These latter include the lines from Nagapattinam to Tavoy and Martaban, concerning which we have already noted complaints. The rest of the system seems to have undergone rapid modification in the decade following the *venda geral*. To begin with, in 1618 and 1619, the Viceroy D. João Coutinho, allowed Cosmo Ledo de Lima, a resident of Nagapattinam, and António Ferreira da Câmara, who had purchased the captaincy of the port at the General Auction, to send ships of theirs to Macau via Melaka. While this was clearly contrary to the interests of the concession holder on the São Tomé-Melaka route, the decision was never revoked. António Ferreira, having paid all of 6,050 *xerafins* for a three year term as Captain of Nagapattinam, was determined to extract from the *Estado* all the privileges that he could. In rapid succession, he obtained from the *Conselho da Fazenda*

157 Viceregal orders issued by Rui Lourenço de Távora, dated July/August 1611 in Cunha Rivara ed., *APO*, Documents 132 and 134, pp. 867–8, 869–70.

158 *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 38, fls. 334–45; for other less complete versions of the same, see *BNL*, Fundo Geral, Codex 1540, fls. 89–91v; *Biblioteca da Ajuda*, Lisbon, Codex 51-VI-2, fls. 51–v.

(Revenue Council) at Goa licences which gave him the right to equip a single voyage to Ormuz, and to send a ship in each of the three years of his captaincy to Ayutthaya via Melaka, this in addition to one to Ceylon and the three mentioned earlier to Macau. All these ships were, naturally, to depart from Nagapattinam, though there are some doubts whether the Ormuz voyage could have been prosecuted given the precarious position of the Persian Gulf port in the early 1620s. In the meanwhile, the purchasers of the Trang and Pegu voyages were resignedly writing off their losses, since hostilities between the rulers of the Restored Taung-ngu dynasty and the *Estado* had made such a voyage impossible.[159] To add to their chagrin, it was found that Ruy Dias de Sampaio, appointed to the newly created post of 'Captain-General of São Tomé and the Enterprise of Pulicat' had illegally sent his own ship to Pegu.[160] The concession system was close to breaking down.

From Bocarro's account written in the early 1630s, it appears that the concession system had been considerably revamped by then. According to him, by about 1630, in theory the structure of voyages made from Coromandel was as follows. The most important navigational and commercial line originating from Nagapattinam was that to Melaka, where 'they take textiles of every sort and some slaves'.[161] These voyages were made by persons who had the permission of the Portuguese Crown, and who paid 3 per cent of the value of the cargo to the Crown in addition to the regular customs duties at Melaka. Since this cess of 3 per cent usually amounted in absolute terms to roughly 4,000 *xerafins*, we may estimate the average value of trade at 135,000 *xerafins*. The ships, once they reached Melaka, could instead of returning to Coromandel go on to either Macau or Manila, and on occasion even pay visits to both these Far Eastern ports, returning to Nagapattinam by way of Melaka. The other voyages of some importance were those to Ujangselang and Bangeri on the upper Malay Peninsula – and both these were by the

159 On the special licenses granted to Cosmo Ledo de Lima and António Ferreira da Câmara; see *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda [1618–25], Mss. 1160, fls. 2, 6v, 16v and 21v. On the Pegu voyage, we have Bocarro's testimony that after 1612–13, it had at least officially been discontinued, *vide* Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte II, pp. 5–6. For later relations with rulers of the Restored Taung-ngu dynasty (in the period up to 1650) see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 26, fl. 103; Livro 28, fl. 202; Livro 30, fl. 101; Livro 31, fl. 81; Livro 36, fls. 111, 135.

160 *Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, Volume V, Document 1114, dated 20 February 1619; also Document 1133, pp. 240–1. There is also a reference in *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 22, fls. 26v–27.

161 Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte II, p. 5. 'A viagem de mayor porte q̃ se fas de Negapatão he pera Malaca em q̃ se Levão roupas de toda a sorte...' etc.

Table 4.9. *Recorded departures from Nagapattinam, 1624–9*

Destination	1624	1625	1629
Manila	1	1	—
Aceh	2	2	—
Melaka	5	3	1
Kedah	1	1	1
Bangeri	—	1	1
Ujangselang	—	1	1
Trang	—	1	1
Martaban	1	—	—
Tavoy	—	1	1
Bengal	—	3	—
TOTAL	10	14	6

Source: See note 164.

early 1630s perquisites of office for the Captains of Nagapattinam. In addition there were the voyages to Pipli and Hughli, which were made on a free-for-all basis. Finally Bocarro mentions that voyages from Nagapattinam to Pegu, which is to say Martaban and Tavoy, were still held as Crown monopolies, though rarely made. In fact, the Dutch records indicate that this voyage was usually made 'illegally' (from the *Estado*'s standpoint) in this period by one Kunjali Marakkayar, a Muslim resident at Nagapattinam.[162]

The description of São Tomé de Meliapor by Bocarro, which forms part of the same text, is a study in contrast. In theory, there existed concession voyages from São Tomé to the same destinations as from Nagapattinam, with the exceptions of Ujangselang and Bangeri, where the Captains of Nagapattinam enjoyed an exclusive preserve. While this might suggest a still-considerable trade from São Tomé, Bocarro in fact notes, 'The navigations are very few, and amount at the most to one voyage to Melaka, and when exceptionally high, one to Pegu, when we are at peace, each voyage being worth a great deal in itself.'[163] Since most of the voyages from Nagapattinam were made in August and September (when the winds most favoured departures), the Dutch Company's factors and informers made it a practice to keep a sharp eye on them, with a view to facilitating raids. Their

162 See for example *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 211v. This ship of 'Kunjali' carried 80,000 *pardaus* worth of goods to Burma from Nagapattinam.

163 Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte II, p. 12; also see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 23, fl. 299.

documents contain three lists of such departures in the course of the 1620s, which are summarised in Table 4.9.[164]

Interestingly enough, for 1625, the Dutch records give us, in addition to the destinations, the identities of the shipowners. These are as follows: the ship to Manila belonged to Manuel de Barros, the two to Aceh to 'Beridongan Moor' and Patana, while those to Melaka belonged to Cosmo Ledo de Lima, to António Figueiredo, and to a *casado* from Cochin, from whom it was rented. Besides, the Kedah ship was that of 'Fammanoda Moor', that to Bangeri belonged to Heitor de Celes and the Captain of Nagapattinam, that to Ujangselang to Manuel Pacheco and the Captain and that to Trang was owned by Manuel de Correa and João Pacheco. Finally the ships to Bengal included one galliot from Goa on freight, and two ships of Nuno Machado, while the Pegu ship – carrying a cargo worth 80,000 *pardaus* – belonged to a Marakkayar merchant, Kunjali. That the trade to Melaka (and thence on occasion to Macau, Manila or – from about 1624 – to Makassar) was of fundamental importance for Nagapattinam's merchants is undoubted. For example, a single ship *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* captured by a VOC fleet when on its return from Melaka to Nagapattinam in 1631 yielded a booty of f. 41,000 in gold from a total cargo worth f. 50,000 (or 12,000 *pagodas*).[165] As the Dutch records themselves indicate, Portuguese owned shipping from Coromandel (in reality probably better characterised as 'Indo-Portuguese', particularly in view of the large *mestiço* component) had by no means declined by 1630 to the extent conventionally posited in the literature and we must bear in mind that, as late as the 1630s, a considerable portion of the south-east Asian market was still supplied by textiles carried on board these ships. To anticipate a later mention in this chapter, the Dutch Commissioner Joost Schouten who investigated the trade in textiles between Coromandel and Melaka after the Dutch capture of the latter town in 1641, was told by *keling* merchants resident in Melaka that at least twenty-four varieties of cloth were brought on this circuit in the 1620s and 1630s, largely for re-export to the farther Archipelago and

[164] This is based on the following Dutch records (all from the series, *AR*, OB):
VOC. 1087, fl. 197 (for 1624)
VOC. 1087, fl. 210v (for 1625)
VOC. 1100, fl. 61v (for 1629)
The references to the shipowners are from the same sources.

[165] On the affair of the ship *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1103, fls. 145, 147–9v; the capture of another ship – this one bound from Manila to Nagapattinam – is mentioned in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1094, fls. 79–v, 88.

mainland south-east Asia.[166] His estimate of the flow *circa* 1640 was of 51,600 pieces each shipping season (or 2,580 *corge*) which included, *inter alia*, *sarassas*, *rambutins*, *behlles*, *muris*, *pattas*, *dupattas* and *chelas*. This he valued at 80,000 *reals* at purchase price (which is to say approximately f. 200,000, or 107,000 *xerafins*), which argues for a decline in the trade after about 1630, when Bocarro estimated it at 135,000 *xerafins*. Schouten's *keling* informants went on to add that a net profit of 50 percent on the average was quite normal, and that they had in the past made even larger gains despite paying 18 per cent as customs plus freight.

The extended discussion of Nagapattinam above is justifiable on the grounds that in the period it was the single most important port of non-Company shipping in south-central Coromandel. This does not imply however that it was the only such, and in a later chapter (Chapter 6), we shall turn our attention to the others, in particular Puducheri, Devanampattinam, Pulicat and Porto Novo. However, in their dimensions as centres of Asian shipping activity in the period, these can scarcely be compared to Nagapattinam. Nor indeed can the port of São Tomé, by 1630 far advanced in its decline, be regarded as of much importance. As early as 1621, the Dutch reported entire seasons in which they succeeded in starving the port of access to any form of waterborne trade, either on the high seas or on the coastal circuit.[167] There are numerous complaints as well in the correspondence between São Tomé and Goa, and these tell us of a town farther and farther in commercial decline.[168] From 1615 on, the Dutch records routinely contain lists of *overloopers*, or Portuguese who had fled São Tomé for the service of the VOC at Pulicat.[169] Those who remained at São Tomé eventually reached a variety of accommodations with the Dutch and the English, and by the middle 1630s and early 1640s were even acting as brokers and middlemen in the purchase of textiles. It was said of one Captain-General of São Tomé that 'he appears more a factor of the Dutch than a Captain of the Portuguese Crown',[170] and this situation was not at all unusual. Ironically enough then, while Goa clung to a hard line, and insisted on prosecuting the

[166] 'Report on Commissary Justus Schouten's visit to Malacca', in *The Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Volume XIV, Part I, January 1936, pp. 135–6, 140–2.

[167] See Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, pp. 35, 96–8.

[168] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 24, fls. 194–5v; Livro 32, fl. 57; Livro 33, fl. 57.

[169] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 202–3v, among other references, for a list of *overloopers*; on the same problem, see also *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 26, fl. 408; Livro 28, fl. 116.

[170] *HAG*, Regimentos e Instruções No. 4, Mss. No. 1421, fl. 166v; also *HAG*, Regimentos e Instruções No. 3, Mss. 1420, fls. 57–9v.

'Enterprise of Pulicat', to expel the Dutch from there with the aid of local *palaiyakkarars* and the Chandragiri Raja, the residents of São Tomé had in their great majority already concluded by 1620 that the battle was a lost one. It was in some senses a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Southern Coromandel, 1630–50

The decades 1630–50 were years of almost continuous war in southern and central Coromandel. The rebellions, and wars between the Nayakas in the 1630s were succeeded late in that decade by the invasion of the region by the forces of the Sultanates of Golconda and Bijapur. It was only with the fall of Senji fort in January 1649 that the process of southward expansion by these kingdoms came to a close. In the close of our period then, Golconda forces controlled the Coromandel coast to São Tomé, and Bijapur controlled the hinterland of the Senji ports of Devanampattinam, Puducheri and Porto Novo. The Nayakas of Tanjavur and Madurai maintained their areas of control, uncomfortably conscious of pressures from the north. In this section, we continue to trace the fortunes of Nagapattinam up to 1650; conjointly, changes in south-east Asia are related to the trading patterns that emerge from the region; in particular, we examine the effect of the Dutch capture of Melaka and the rise of the Makassar connection, the last – to some extent at least – at the cost of the trade with Manila.

Nagapattinam around 1630 continued to be the single most important port of operation of non-Company shippers in south-central Coromandel. The settlers there, Portuguese, *mestiços*, and local Muslims, had reached an understanding with the Danes, based at nearby Tarangambadi, which gave them a certain commonality of interests in the trade to Tenasserim, as well as that to Makassar.[171] While losses to Dutch cruising continued, they had become a fact of life, and it appears that they were not allowed to interfere with the continuity of commercial operations. The period after 1630 was inaugurated by an important event – the loss of Hughli to Mughal forces in 1632, which meant at least a temporary cessation of trade

[171] There were the initial conflicts between the Portuguese of Nagapattinam and the Danish Company. In 1626, a ship of Cristovão Ferreira from Nagapattinam was captured, apparently by the Danes, at Trang; on this see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 30. Also see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 23, fl. 177; Livro 24, fls. 194–5v, on rivalry in respect of Tenasserim. The accommodation that was reached is mentioned in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 15; also see VOC. 1083, fl. 217.

with Bengal.[172] On the other hand, however, one notices from this period on the growing importance of the trade with Makassar.

The establishment of the Dutch in the eastern part of Indonesia early in the seventeenth century is a crucial catalyst in the rise of Makassar. This was also the period in which the King of Tallo' (who was also Chancellor of Gowa, the south Sulawesi Kingdom that was a twin of Tallo') converted to Islam, apparently under Acehnese influence. Under this monarch, Ala-ud-din (1593–1637), and his successor Muhammad Said (1639–53), the port of Makassar came to flourish as a centre of the 'contraband' clove trade in particular, with the VOC hard pressed to check the flow through this entrepôt to the Danes, English and the independent Asian (and Portuguese) traders settled there.[173] This they finally succeeded in doing during the reign of Hasanuddin (1653–69), with the attack led by Cornelis Speelman on Makassar in 1669.[174] The English Company had settled in Makassar as early as 1613, though the port did not become of major importance in that company's trade until as late as 1624. The Danes began to trade there from the early 1620s as well, but both these companies had been preceded by private Portuguese traders, to whom the port owed a good deal of its vitality during the half-century when it really prospered. The English captain, John Jourdain, on his visit to Makassar in 1613 had already declared it to be a likely market where the textiles from Coromandel could be sold, 'if the Portugall from Malacca did not furnish them'.[175] In this early period, the practice seems to have been for ships owned by private Portuguese on Coromandel to take their goods as far as Melaka, with the transshipment from there to Makassar being left to traders based either in Makassar's burgeoning Portuguese quarter or in Melaka itself. When the Nagapattinam Portuguese did venture east of Melaka, it was to Manila or Macau (and on occasion in a triangular route combining both these ports of call).[176] The direct trade

[172] On the effects of the loss of Hughli, see *inter alia* Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, pp. 25–37, as also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Staying on: the Portuguese of southern Coromandel in the late 17th century', *IESHR*, Volume XXII, No. 4, 1985.

[173] See C.R. Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo*, pp. 3–5; D.K. Bassett, 'English trade in the Celebes, 1613–1667'.

[174] Bassett, 'English Trade'; Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, pp. 45–71.

[175] W. Foster, ed., *The Journal of John Jourdain*, London, 1905, p. 294.

[176] Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte II, p. 5. Also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Commerce and conflict: two views of Portuguese Melaka in the 1620s', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume XIX (1), 1988.

Table 4.10. *Recorded shipping from/to Nagapattinam, 1630–50*

From/to	1632	1639	1645	1649	1650
Makassar	—	—	1	1	1
Johor	—	—	—	1	—
Aceh	1	3	2	2	3
Melaka	2	3	1	—	—
Kedah	1	—	—	—	—
Bangeri	1	1	—	—	—
Ujangselang	1	—	1	—	—
Mergui	—	—	1	1	1
Pegu	—	1	—	1	—
TOTAL	6	8	6	6	5

Note: While all other lists are of departures, that of 1649 alone is of arrivals.
Source: See note 180.

between Nagapattinam and Makassar can be traced to the middle 1620s something of a crucial period for several groups trading in the latter port. For the English, the importance of Makassar after 1624 reflected their loss of access to other parts of the eastern Archipelago following the breakdown of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of Defence with the so-called 'Massacre at Amboyna'; other Coromandel traders such as Mir Kamaluddin of Masulipatnam also entered the fray possibly for similar reasons. The Portuguese at Nagapattinam were one of the earliest groups to perceive the advantages of selling Coromandel textiles in the eastern Archipelago and transporting cloves back to their port. The Batavia *Dagh-Registers* in the late 1620s and 1630s carry many mentions of ships from Nagapattinam headed for Makassar, the earliest reference to the trade from Coromandel being to a ship from São Tomé which, passing through the Sunda Straits, had arrived at Makassar in November 1623, departing for São Tomé through the same route in May 1624, and returning once more in May 1625.[177] In July 1625, we hear of the arrival in Makassar in November and December of the previous year of two ships from Melaka, two galliots from Macau, and some ships from Nagapattinam; these would doubtless be part of the five recorded in 1624 as leaving Nagapattinam for Melaka.[178] One may surmise whether Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo, resident at Nagapattinam around this period, was himself a participant in the trade, rising from a petty

[177] J.E. Heeres, ed., *Dagh-Register gehouden in 't Casteel Batavia, Anno 1624–1629* (henceforth DR), The Hague, 1896, pp. 124–5.

[178] *Ibid.*, p. 180. These ships were reported to be lightly armed, depending on their mobility to see them through this perilous voyage.

trader to an important resident at Makassar by the late 1630s, and eventually exercising considerable political influence there.[179]

The continuing trade with Makassar was not the only lively link that the settlers of Nagapattinam maintained in the 1630s and 1640s. From the occasional Dutch data on shipping, we gather that the Nagapattinam shippers traded extensively with Aceh, and to a limited extent with Bangeri, Ujangselang, Tavoy and Mergui. The data available are summarised in Table 4.10.[180]

As has been mentioned earlier, there were losses to the Dutch through the greater part of this period. Among these was the yacht *Santa Maria*, captured off Ujangselang in October 1636 with eighty-eight packs of textiles and other goods, including 40–45 lasts of rice.[181] Nevertheless, the cruising by the VOC fleets, be it off Ponto de Gale or Ponto Pedro, or even in the Melaka Straits did not overly preoccupy Nagapattinam's settlers. They continued to prosecute successful mercantile operations, with a nervous eye however to the Nayaka of Tanjavur, who could – if aggravated, or short of liquidity – make the unexpected raid on the Portuguese settlement.[182] One of these, in 1632, in particular, caused the Portuguese much discomfiture, and the VOC a good deal of amusement, but it is remarkable that, in spite of this, the settlers refused to let the *Estado* build a fort there. Their fear of the Portuguese authorities and the consequences of allowing them a larger foothold was clearly somewhat larger than their fear of the Nayaka. The targets particularly favoured by the Nayaka were the richly endowed churches of the town, which as we have pointed out earlier, continued to be financially supported *in extenso* by the Portuguese mercantile community of the town. We continue to encounter in the records plentiful references to such traders as Cosmo Ledo de Lima, and his brother Manuel, the former in particular a powerful figure. Not all the information that is available is complimentary to their character: for example there was an investigation conducted against them for being accomplices of one

[179] Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo*, pp. 1–2.

[180] This data is available from the following documents, all part of the series *AR*, OB,:
1632: VOC. 1109, fl. 276.
1639: VOC. 1130, fl. 978.
1645: VOC. 1158, fl. 225.
1649: VOC. 1172, fl. 557; VOC 1184, fls. 334–5.
1650: VOC. 1184, fls. 304–v.

[181] On this, see H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *DR Batavia, Anno 1637*, The Hague, 1899, pp. 42–3.

[182] See Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte II, pp. 2–3; for Dutch views see *GM*, I, pp. 338–9, Brouwer, Vlack and van der Burch to the *Heren XVII*, 1st December 1632.

Francisco de Lima (conceivably a relative) in a robbery that was committed by him, in which he murdered some *vanias* in Sind, and took over their ship, eventually leaving the proceeds of the robbery with the brothers.[183] So too we are told that they had much money in their possession belonging by rights to the Portuguese Crown, which had been left in their keeping by Luís Pimenta and Marcos Soares, who had embezzled it in Ceylon, and were in prison. Nonetheless, when we turn to the documents concerning Nagapattinam, they figure there prominently even as late as 1645, with their names and signatures appended to several individual and collective petitions.[184]

The position of Nagapattinam as a centre of trade was threatened as the 1630s reached their close not only by the Nayaka, but by the Dutch, who succeeded after a protracted war of attrition in forcing the surrender of the Portuguese garrison at Melaka in 1641. Having done so, they declared with remarkable sophistry that it was the right of Melaka *qua* Melaka (and consequently of whichever power was in possession of Melaka), to have all trade in the region pass through the town and pay customs duties there. Hence, they decreed that all trade from Gujarat, Coromandel and so on would not be permitted to flow directly to the Malay Peninsula ports or to Aceh, but would have to touch Melaka of necessity.[185] It should be noted that this line of thinking was not adhered to by all those in the VOC's decision-making hierarchy, and that many of the more pragmatic policymakers did realise that the balance of power in the subcontinent did not leave room for such dictats. Indeed, as the experience in Surat demonstrated, this was an issue of sufficient importance to bring local merchants and the Mughal officials to form a united front, to which the VOC had eventually to accede.[186] In the case of the Coromandel ports, while the smaller and less well-connected shipowner and trader might be amenable to such bullying, the Dutch would have to either accede to the demands of others or be prepared for a costly and eventually unwinnable confrontation.

This did not apply to their relations with Nagapattinam's shippers

[183] *HAG*, Livro de Segredos No. 1 (1635–47) Mss. 1416, fl. 14v., provision dated 6 April 1636.

[184] For instance, see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 51, fl. 118v; Livro 56, fls. 225–v; also *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, No. 14, Document 116.

[185] On the policy in this respect, see G. Irwin, 'The Dutch and the tin trade in Malaysia in the 17th century', in J. Ch'en and N. Tarling, eds., *Studies in the Social History of China and South-East Asia*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 267–89; also S. Arasaratnam, 'Some notes on the Dutch in Malacca and in the Indo-Malayan trade', *Journal of South-East Asian History*, Volume X, No. 3, 1969, pp. 325–46.

[186] van Santen, 'De VOC in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620–1660', pp. 19–25.

though, and the VOC's exploratory missions to ports such as Bangeri, Kedah and Ujangselang convinced the Dutch of the need to cut ties between them and Nagapattinam. This sort of thinking was applied as well to the Asian-owned shipping that originated from the central Coromandel ports, and elaborate schemes were hatched to displace these as far as possible. In the case of the trade to Pegu, for example, it was suggested that the VOC provide freight services from Coromandel at such low rates as to put Asian shippers out of business; once this was achieved, they would simply withdraw the service.[187] Further, a scheme was conceived of in 1641 to hold São Tomé and Nagapattinam to ransom; as a consequence, on the 12 April 1642, five Dutch ships commanded by Cornelis Leenderstszoon Blauw assumed battle stations outside the river of Nagapattinam.[188] The Portuguese on shore hastily gathered together all those who remained; the *adhikari*, who on behalf of the Nayaka of Tanjavur was the overseer of the customs house, had also departed in haste. Resistance was counselled by some, but quickly rejected by the *Eleitos*, who declared with the spirit of merchants (which they in truth were) that it would 'lead to the destruction of infinite people, and of a settlement both great and beautiful', adding pragmatically that 'they would give half of their goods, and remain poor in honour, but at least not destroyed and affronted'.[189] The Dutch promptly demanded a ransom and landed a force on shore, marching through the town to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets. After much bargaining, the landing party agreed to accept a quarter of the initial demand, but, before the money could be collected and handed over, soldiers of the Nayaka arrived and began to skirmish with the Dutch. In the ensuing confusion, the Tanjavur forces also entered the churches, and made away with the crown of Our Lady of the Conception, and the diadems of other saints. The Dutch, believing that the settlers had 'treacherously' called on the Nayaka for aid, retired to their ships with some hostages, and departed on 20 April, writing the settlers a piqued note; following this, the Dutch insisted that the entire sum initially demanded be handed over, and also that Nagapattinam be excluded from the territories where the Ten Years Truce would be in effect until the payment was made. This crudely extortionate attack,

[187] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1122, fl. 680.

[188] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 52, fls. 119–22; for the Dutch account of the same, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1138, fls. 766–7, 768–9; finally, for a chronicle of events, J. Castets, 'How Negapatam in 1642 became the first Portuguese possession on the Coromandel coast', *Journal of the Bombay Historical Society*, Volume V, 1939.

[189] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 51, fls. 119–20.

combined with a later attack on the settlement the same year by the Nayaka (possibly on Dutch instigation) did what the persuasive powers of the Conde de Linhares had not achieved: it drove the settlers at Nagapattinam willy-nilly into the arms of the *Estado da Índia*.[190]

By mid 1643, an exchange of correspondence with Goa and Lisbon saw the settlement of Our Lady of the Conception of Nagapattinam granted the title of City, with a City Council and aldermen replacing the *Eleitos*, and a customs house being created in the name of D. João IV of Portugal.[191] The fortress, already under construction since mid 1642 (and arguably one of the reasons that prompted the Nayaka's attack late that year) was completed, with the settlers contributing to it by financing individual walls and bulwarks, so that the *Estado's* own expenses were minimal.[192] Together, with the grant of City status, the Crown decided to have a Captain-Major resident in the town, in addition to a captain, in charge of the garrison of the fortress. Neither the fortress nor the customs house, the two bones of contention with the Nayaka, proved of much utility. The details of the statute book of the customs house were finalised in 1645 after extended tripartite wrangling, involving the Crown, the viceroy and the settlers, but only a few years later it was declared to be yielding next to nothing, a further example of the inherently anti-statist attitudes of the settlers.[193]

Indeed, these settlers continued to manipulate Goa-appointed officials with impunity, and (as the data on shipping show) continued to pursue their trade to a variety of destinations until the early 1650s. Thereafter, with the resumption of hostilities with the Dutch, commerce seems to have slackened somewhat; the eventual loss of the Portuguese strongholds in Sri Lanka only further contributed to it. In the event, the fortification of Nagapattinam proved of little utility, for when threatened by a Dutch squadron in July 1658, the settlers meekly surrendered, remaining (as they themselves had put it on an earlier occasion) 'poor in honour, but at least not affronted and destroyed'. At least some of them, including the redoubtable

[190] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 51, fl. 118v; Livro 54, fl. 176; Livro 55, fls. 489, 532; Livro 56, fls. 83–4, 210–v, 221–4, 225–v.

[191] *HAG*, Livro de Consulta, Mss. 1043, fls. 21v–22v; *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 56, fls. 221–4, 'Regimento da alfândega de Negapatão', final version, dated 31 January 1645.

[192] *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, No. 14, Document 116, petition of Manuel Ledo de Lima to the King of Portugal, dated 25 October 1642.

[193] *ANTT*, Junta da Fazenda Pública, Livro 2, Cota C34/E9/P2, fls. 152–53. I thank João Paulo Oliveira e Costa for bringing this reference to my notice.

Manuel Teixeira Pinto, transferred their base to Porto Novo, some miles north of Nagapattinam, where we find them trading in the 1680s, a living proof of Lusitanian pragmatism.[194]

The trade of Masulipatnam, 1600–50

We may return now to a consideration of the other side of the coin as defined in the period 1570 to 1600, namely the trade of the great north Coromandel port of Masulipatnam. In an earlier section, we noted the close relations between the Golconda court (at Bagnagar) and the port of Masulipatnam. The two were several days' journey apart, but Sultan Muhammad Quli had had a road constructed in the closing years of the sixteenth century to link port and capital, reinforcing several causeways at either end. The pulse of activity in the port may be thought to have been determined by two periodic events: the annual cycle of the arrival and departure of ships, the former largely concentrated in March and April, and the latter in September and October, and the periodic comings and goings of the inland *qafilas*, linking Masulipatnam with inland markets such as Rajahmundry, Makkapeta, Bezwada and Bagnagar, and eventually providing access to Burhanpur, Bijapur, Dabhol, Goa and even Surat. The annual cycle of shipping was somewhat disturbed by the Companies, which tended to move their shipping in Asia in times other than the 'classic' sailing seasons between points. In the case of Asian owned shipping, the annual concentration of arrivals and departures remained in 1650 largely as it was in 1600, the ships on the Red Sea and Persian Gulf runs being the only ones that left later in the season, in late December or early to middle January.[195]

We have already noted the strong links between Masulipatnam and Pegu and Masulipatnam and Aceh late in the sixteenth century. These are confirmed when one turns to the first three decades of the seventeenth century. The Dutch records for the period up to the mid

[194] See P.S.S. Pissurlencar, ed., *Assentos do Conselho do Estado*, 5 volumes, Goa, 1953–57, Volume III, pp. 378–82, 413–14, *passim*; also *HAG*, Monções do Reino, 26B, fls. 383–4v. Finally, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Staying on: the Portuguese of southern Coromandel', for a more detailed exposition of this point.

[195] See *AR* (Loose papers), VOC. 548, 'Rapport (Informatie) door Lodewyck Isacz overgelevert over de handel op de Kust van Coromandel', z. d. (1608); a less legible version of the same document is preserved in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1055, a collection of unfoliated papers from 1608–1610. Also 'Anonymous Relation' in W.H. Moreland ed., *Relations of Golconda*, pp. 78–9; 'Methwold's Relation', pp. 36–7.

Table 4.11. *Recorded Asian shipping at Masulipatnam, 1624–30*

From/to	1624(d)	1625(d)	1626(a)	1627(a)	1627(d)	1628(a)
Arakan	6	2	3	2	1	?
Aceh	2	3	2	2	2	?
Pegu	4	2	4	2	2	4
Mergui	1	3	2	1	1	1
Mocha	2	?	?	?	1	?
Maldives	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	15	10	11	7	7	5

From/to	1628(d)	1629(a)	1629(d)	1630(d)
Arakan	2	3	1	1
Aceh	2	2	2	1
Pegu	2	1	2	3
Mergui	3	—	2	1
Mocha	1	?	?	?
Maldives	1	—	—	—
TOTAL	11	6	7	6

Note: (a) refers to arrivals and (d) to departures from the port.
Source: See note 197.

1620s however contain only intermittent mentions of Asian shipping from the port, enumerating from time to time the principal trading partners but rarely the number of vessels on each route. The situation improves though as one enters the 1620s, for somewhat piquant reasons. Early in the 1620s, relations between the VOC and Golconda authorities had deteriorated considerably when, following the capture of a vessel bound for Arakan by the Dutch, their Director of the Coast factories, Abraham van Uffelen, was seized and briefly imprisoned, maltreatment possibly contributing to his death shortly thereafter.[196] The Dutch smarted under the 'insult' but bided their time, their projected mode of reprisal being the seizure of Masulipatnam shipping in order to demand redress with these as hostage. In the order to evaluate the nature of the hostage they intended taking, they required to keep a close check on incoming and outgoing Asian ships.

[196] Om Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India*, p. 178, note 1; Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, pp. 29–30.

The information from their records is summarised in Table 4.11.[197]

A brief commentary is in order on the figures above. In the first place, the information is by no means as comprehensive as that contained in the shipping lists that are available from the 1680s onwards, and is gleaned either from the letters of the Dutch factors, or, more frequently, from the *Dagh-Register* (Daily Diary) maintained at the Masulipatnam and Pulicat factories. The arrival figures (a) refer almost always to the months of March and April. Hence shipping from the Red Sea, which usually arrived at Masulipatnam in September, is generally excluded.

What is of particular interest in the information summarised above is that we frequently know the identity of the shipowners on each route, so that we are afforded an important glimpse into the character of Masulipatnam's shipowning community in the 1620s. We know for example that the arrivals in March and April 1627 included a ship each of Mir Kasim and Mir Muhammad Murad, both Persians resident at Masulipatnam. These ships had arrived from Pegu, and the latter's ship carried a cargo valued at well over 300,000 *pagodas* [Masulipatnam], or f. 1,350,000. This is particularly impressive, since the entire import bill into Coromandel of the VOC in the period was roughly equal to this sum. The ships from Arakan in the same season included one of Haji Baba, merchant resident at Mrauk-u, and another of Achyutappa Chetti *en route* to Pulicat. Other arrivals included Alivardi's ship from Aceh, and a large ship of Mir Kamaluddin from the same port. Finally, there was the ship from Mergui (or Tenasserim) belonging to the Ayutthaya ruler Song Tham, which had been making an annual appearance from 1624.[198]

The departures recorded later in the same year make interesting reading as well. Here we observe two ships destined for Aceh, one belonging to Mir Kamaluddin, the other to Mulla Muhammad Taqi Taqrishi, at that time *havaldar* of Masulipatnam but soon to be elevated to *Sar-i-Khail*. In addition, there is the ship to Mergui mentioned earlier, Haji Baba's vessel to Arakan, and Mir Muham-

[197] The table is based on the following data gleaned from *AR*, OB: for 1624, VOC. 1083, fl. 223; for 1625, VOC. 1087, fl. 167; for 1626, VOC. 1090, fl. 247; 1627 arrivals from VOC. 1095, fls. 62–5; 1627 departures from VOC. 1095, fl. 40. In 1628, arrivals are recorded in VOC. 1095, fls. 73–4, and departures in VOC. 1095, fls. 17v and 26. Finally, 1629 arrivals are gleaned from VOC. 1095, fl. 73, 1629 departures from VOC. 1100, fl. 72 and 1630 (d) from VOC. 1100, fls. 136–41.

[198] See George V. Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand*, Detroit, 1977, p. 85. However, the first ships sent by Song Tham from Mergui-Tenasserim to the Coast are in 1624 and not 1628.

mad Murad and Mir Kasim's ships to Pegu.[199] Besides, there was the ship on the Mocha run which departed late in December 1627, and which flew the Sultan's flag. To avoid the tedium of discussing the shipowners season by season, we shall briefly sum up what one gathers regarding the three succeeding years. The participation of Mir Murad, the Ayutthaya rulers and Kamaluddin continues, as does that of Muhammad Taqi. The ships from Arakan include in these years, besides that of Haji Baba, that of the *Kotwal* of Mrauk-u as well as the ruler of Arakan. An interesting new element in the Pegu trade is the ship of Mir Azim Shah, described as the 'coopman' (merchant) of the Shah of Persia resident at Masulipatnam.[200]

Such information as we have then suggests the dominance in the late 1620s of a handful – half a dozen to ten – merchants of Persian origin, predominantly Sayyids, based at Masulipatnam. These included almost every *havaldar* of Masulipatnam in the period, and also other merchants of substantial wealth and influence, much detested by their European rivals. The Dutch man, Pieter Gilliesz van Ravesteyn, spoke for his compatriots when he wrote (in about 1615), that, among the Moors of Coromandel, 'the greatest respect and profits are obtained by the Persians, a nation exceedingly haughty and self-regarding, beyond all other Indian nations'. These Persians, who often arrived in Golconda from their homeland as 'men of noble ancestry but small means' (as one of Ravesteyn's contemporaries put it) then went on to dominate the court politics and trade of Golconda.[201] However, as we shall see in greater detail in a later chapter (while discussing the careers of two of these), the late 1620s represented something of a high-water mark for Persian fortunes at Masulipatnam. A substantial climatic disturbance, and a temporary derailment of the agrarian economy, saw them lose substantial ground between 1630 and 1635 to traders based at partner ports, in particular to the royal trade from Aceh, Arakan and Mergui.[202] Faced with these difficulties, as well as troubled conditions in the ports of the Red Sea, at least some of them turned to explore a new trade – that of the Persian Gulf.

It was only in the mid 1630s that trade returned to an even keel. By this time however, the profile of the trading community in Masulipat-

[199] For departures in September 1627, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 40. On Muhammad Taqi and the politics of the period, Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla, The General of Aurangzeb*, 2nd edition, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 6–7.

[200] On Mir Azim Shah (the Dutch records refer to him as Mirsachimcha or Marchimcha) see, *inter alia*, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 18.

[201] See Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda*, p. 56.

[202] For the events of the early 1630s, see Chapter 6 below.

nam had altered substantially. Of the names mentioned in the context of the late 1620s, some had died, and at least one (Mir Kamaluddin) had disappeared under somewhat mysterious circumstances. In the late 1630s, the two dominant figures who emerged were Mir Muhammad Sayyid Ardestani (whose activities we shall have occasion to discuss in a later chapter), and Shaikh Malik Muhammad.[203] The situation they confronted was not an easy one. The Dutch were now making claims on not merely Melaka (which they finally took in early 1641), but on the trade to large sections of the Malay Peninsula. The navigation to Aceh was actively discouraged for a time in the early 1640s, as was that to Makassar through the same decade. The tactics used by the shipowners of Masulipatnam were significant. First, they concentrated increasingly on trade to the Middle East; with commerce in the Red Sea reviving and the commencement of direct trade with Basrah, this was a fruitful line of development. Secondly, the trade to Pegu, one of the mainstays of Masulipatnam commerce from the 1580s, continued to be under their control. Despite repeated attempts, neither the Dutch nor the English could make inroads of substance into this lucrative market.[204] And finally, the political connections of the Masulipatnam-based Persians truly stood them in good stead in this period of stress. By wheedling, threatening and blackmailing the Dutch, playing the Portuguese card when the occasion demanded and using physical force on Dutch employees when necessary, Muhammad Sayyid succeeded by trial and error in perfecting the only approach that could keep his trading empire alive under *Pax Neerlandica.* By 1650, he operated a fleet of ten ships out of Masulipatnam, including an 800 ton Great Ship, used by him in the Middle East trade.[205]

The departure of Muhammad Sayyid from the Golconda scene in 1656 marks the beginning of the decline of Masulipatnam as a port dominated by Asian shipowners and traders. However, as I have argued elsewhere, this decline does not assume significant proportion until the late 1660s, when a combination of European attacks on Masulipatnam shipping in the western Indian Ocean, and the decline in the political fortunes of the Persians in the Golconda Sultanate,

[203] On the profile of shipowners in late 1630s Masulipatnam see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fls. 1139–40; VOC. 1130, fls. 1037–8; VOC. 1135, fls. 669–70, *passim.*

[204] An extensive discussion of this is to be found in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Trade and the regional economy of south India, c. 1550 to 1650', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Delhi, 1986, pp. 247–9, 258–9, 378–80.

[205] Joseph Brennig, 'The textile trade of 17th century northern Coromandel', pp. 32–4.

causes the port to be dominated increasingly by English private traders and shipowners. The odd Asian trader who remains, like the Armenian John DeMercora, and the few Persians who continue to trade in their own ships, are now reduced to a subordinate position.[206] The last quarter of the seventeenth century sees Masulipatnam in the role of a port in its twilight years, increasingly a feeder for Madras, which had, since the 1650s, grown dramatically on account of English private trade.

The port of Cochin: its rise and apparent decline, 1580–1650

We have noted in an earlier chapter how the catalytic role of the Portuguese in the balance of commercial and political power in Kerala transformed the port of Cochin from the sleepy village of 1501 (when it was first visited by Pedro Álvares Cabral), so that Gasparo Balbi, who visited in the 1580s described it as 'after Goa the first city that the Portuguese have in India, and of great commerce in drugs and other goods'.[207] His fellow Venetian Cesare Federici, as well as the Florentine Filippo Sassetti (who had reason to know Cochin well), were unanimous in describing the port in the 1570s and 1580s, as a rising star on the trading horizon of western India.[208] We have already seen in the previous chapter that Cochin had come to perform multiple functions by the middle of the sixteenth century. If, on the one hand, it provided pepper for the *naus* bound for Lisbon (though it is true that this pepper came increasingly from Kanara), it also was a major centre of trade to Bengal, to Ormuz, and after the 1560s, to China via Melaka.

We have also seen that, in all these aspects of its trade, Cochin was aided by the peculiar position it enjoyed, as a centre of *casado* commerce, which was nonetheless under the independent jurisdiction of a ruler – the King of Cochin. Although *Cochim de baixo* – which is to say the Portuguese quarter – may have been declared a City in formal juridical terms, the *casados* still paid customs at a lower rate to the Cochin *raja* rather than the higher rate applicable in the customs houses of the *Estado da Índia*, and succeeded in other ways as well in furthering their private fortunes, rather than filling the treasury of the

206 Cf. Records of Fort St. George, Madras, *Masulipatam Consultation Book, 1682–83*, Madras, 1916; also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Persians, pilgrims and Portuguese: the travails of Masulipatnam shipping in the western Indian Ocean, 1590–1665', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XXII, (3) 1988.

207 Cf. *Viaggi alle Indie Orientali di C. Federici e G. Balbi*, ed. Olga Pinto, p. 149.

208 For Federici's account, *Ibid*, pp. 23–5; also see Ettore Marcucci, ed., *Lettere edite e inedite di Filippo Sasseti*, pp. 186–7, *passim*.

Estado. For instance, since lower rates prevailed at Cochin, other traders entered into side-deals with Cochin's *casados*, who would bring the goods through the customs house claiming ownership. On other occasions, shippers claimed that as the monsoon was due, it was dangerous to sail further up the coast than Cochin, using this as a justification for not putting into Goa.[209] It began to appear by the 1570s that the only solution to this problem was to restructure customs, and for the *Estado* to enter into a contract with the rajas of Cochin; this was first attempted in 1583 by the Viceroy D. Francisco Mascarenhas, who had received instructions from Philip of Spain to re-fashion customs regulations at both Cochin and Chaul to plug this gap.

Using as intermediaries various clerics, as well as the Captain of Cochin, D. Jorge de Meneses Baroche,[210] the King of Cochin Kesava Rama Varma [1565–1601] was persuaded to sign a treaty. This contained the following clauses: first, that all those settled at Cochin who were not *casados* [family-men] and who brought goods from China, Melaka, Maluku et cetera could not unload or transfer goods at Cochin, but had to come to Goa to pay duties first; secondly, that *casado* settlers, Portuguese as well as Jews, Hindus and Muslims, would pay 6 percent entry duties to the Kings of Cochin, besides perquisites to the customs officials; thirdly that the goods from the 'North', which is to say the western Indian Ocean littoral belonging to Portuguese, *mestiços* and native Christians who were *not* settled at Cochin would pay duties at Cochin to the Portuguese Treasury; that all goods would pay duty on exit to the Portuguese Treasury, no matter to whom they belonged.[211] This treaty was negotiated and signed in secret, but, when its contents were made public in Cochin, the residents there were highly incensed. They had in the past paid no more than 3½ percent to the *rajas* of Cochin on entry and no export duties, so that the new treaty was wholly against their interests. Nor was the Cochin *raja* overjoyed, since the increase in rates was balanced on the one hand by a whittling away of the categories whom he could charge duty, besides which the new structure threatened to divert trade away from his port. Whether with his connivance or not, the settlers rose up in arms and attacked the Captain in his fort, creating a situation of such seriousness that he was forced to stay–

209 *BNL*, Fundo Geral, Códice 2702, fls. 3–3v.
210 Diogo do Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década X, Parte I, Livro IV, Cap. XIII, pp. 472–80.
211 *Ibid.*, pp. 476–7; Judice Biker, ed., *Colecção de Tratados e Concertos de Pazes*, Volume XIV, pp. 27–8.

on his own initiative – the new legislation, appealing to Goa to reconsider.

The final arrangement, arrived at early in 1585 after protracted tripartite negotiations involving representatives of the Cochin *raja*, of the viceroy and of the Cochin City Council (in effect the *casados*) was far more favourable to the *casados* but left the *raja* even worse off. In fact, early on in the second series of negotiations, he left matters in the hands of his 'regedor' representative, declaring with some bitterness that the Portuguese – both the *Estado* and the settlers – were able to pressurise him solely on account of the border wars that he was at the time fighting with Calicut; he was thus so occupied that he was vulnerable on all other fronts. The final settlement arrived at was enormously complex. Various categories of traders were set out with different rules applicable to each. In sum the picture was as follows: (i) The *casados* of Cochin would pay 3½ percent on entry to the *raja* and no export duties. (ii) The Portuguese *solteiros* [literally, unmarried men] of Cochin would pay 6 percent to the *Estado* at Cochin. (iii) All other nations, Muslims, Jews, Venetians, Armenians, local Christians and Christians resident south of Cochin would pay the usual rates (of 3½ percent) to the *raja*. (iv) All Portuguese and *mestiços* not resident in Cochin, as well as Christians resident north of Cochin would pay 6 per cent on entry and exit to the *Estado*.[212]

To administer this immensely complex system (where problems of identity themselves were mind-boggling) a unique customs house was to exist at the port, where all goods would be despatched at a single table, and the proceeds divided according to the regulations discussed earlier between the two monarchs. In addition, all goods had to pay on entry a duty of 1 per cent towards a fund controlled by the City Council. The figures for this last collection are available to us for over a decade, and they enable us to estimate imports into Cochin in the period 1587–98 (see Table 4.12).[213]

Not surprisingly, these figures show that the trade of Cochin was at a considerably lower level than that of Goa in the corresponding period. The Cochin figures show an annual average of roughly 690,000 *xerafins* for imports, in contrast with an estimate for the total seaborne trade of Goa in the late sixteenth century of 4,752,000 *xerafins* per annum on average. The trade of Goa – if one accepts this estimate by M.N. Pearson and assumes that Cochin's exports were

212 *Biblioteca de Ajuda*, Lisbon, Códice 51–VII–14, fls. 50v–54v, the final agreement being dated 8 January 1585.

213 *BNL.*, Fundo Geral, Códice, 1980, fls. 1–10.

Table 4.12. *Imports into Cochin, 1587–98 (in xerafins)*

Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1587	723,454	1593	743,319
1588	424,893	1594	685,027
1589	808,687	1595	818,849
1590	921,701	1596	852,051
1591	569,920	1597	481,316
1592	593,862	1598	650,425

Source: See note 213.

more or less equal to its imports – would have been roughly three and a half times that of Cochin.[214]

However, it is important to note that Cochin gained a position of importance as a port on the south-west coast not principally by the use of force or by diverting trade to it; its prosperity in the sixteenth century had somewhat different roots from that of Goa, whose customs collection figures were undoubtedly swelled by coercion and compulsion. The major natural advantage that Cochin possessed – besides its pepper producing hinterland – was that it was located at a cross-roads where at least four major commodity streams met. There was the trade from Gujarat, already of significant dimensions by the 1520s, in large measure from Diu and Surat, and also from ports on the Konkan coast, such as Chaul. This together with the trade from Ormuz and the minor link with the Red Sea formed one commodity web. A second stream was the *Carreira da Índia* and the trade to Europe via the Cape route, while a third was the eastern trade to Manila, Macau and Melaka. The fourth stream – possibly the most important – was the trade to Bengal. From the above description, it would be clear that Cochin was not just a port with a producing hinterland which gave it prosperity; it was also an important entrepôt, where the textiles of Gujarat were landed and transshipped to diverse destinations such as Europe and the Archipelago, while those from Bengal found their way to Lisbon and the Persian Gulf. The maintenance of this entrepôt aspect of its character was crucial to its prosperity, as emerges from the events of the first half of the seventeenth century.

In the half century following 1600, the dominant theme that emerges from the Portuguese documentation is that the city of

214 M.N. Pearson, 'The port city of Goa', in Pearson, *Coastal Western India*, pp. 75–6; also see *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, Caixa No. 9, Document 14, which gives customs figures for Goa in the period 1622–24.

Cochin, once an opulent centre of trade, was now in decline, with trade on each one of the major navigational lines mentioned above being choked off as the century progressed. Yet modern historians have been somewhat reluctant to accept this view, arguing that the real extent of the decline was quite probably insubstantial. Anthony Disney, remarking on a description of Cochin in the 1630s, avers that the poverty of the city was 'perhaps exaggerated', adding that 'whatever the fate of the official Portuguese spice trade, private trade to and from Cochin, mainly with other ports on the west coast of India and across the Arabian Sea, continued to prosper in the early seventeenth century'.[215] His evidence to support this, however, stems from 1610, when an anonymous description of the *Estado da Índia* declares that 'today there are no rich men in India, save in Cochin',[216] a statement which does leave open the question of how the city fared in the 1620s. In what follows, it is just this unanswered question that is addressed; was the decline of Cochin real, or was it a fiction devised by *casados* resident at Cochin to gain special privileges for themselves?

There can be little doubt that, after 1600, the pepper cargoes carried on the *Carreira da Índia* contained less Malabar than Kanara pepper. In fact, the relative proportion of Malabar to Kanara pepper in the period 1612 to 1629 was in the ratio of 1:2, even though royal instructions from Europe repeatedly stressed that two-thirds of the pepper cargoes were to be procured at Cochin alone.[217] The annual average procured in these years from Malabar was no more than 3,000 heavy *quintais*, which compares unfavourably with the period 1586–98, when the annual average exported from Malabar on the Cape route approached 10,000 heavy *quintais*.[218] Yet, as Disney quite rightly points out, the *Carreira da Índia* was merely one of the many elements in Cochin's trade, and one would scarcely expect that a decline in the procurement of pepper on this one line would lead to a situation in which the King of Spain would declare (as he did in a letter to his viceroy, dated 11 February 1616) that 'the city of Cochin, having been extremely opulent in past years, is, I am informed in a

[215] A.R. Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire*, pp. 11–13.

[216] Disney cites an anonymous account from the *BP e AD*, Évora, Codice CXVI/1–18, fls. 26v–27, 'E assy não ha oje na Índia homens Ricos senão em Cochim...'.

[217] Disney, *Twilight*, p. 162, Appendix 2.2, 'Pepper shipments from Goa to Lisbon'; *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 21, fl. 164; Livro 24, fl. 369, et cetera.

[218] K.S. Mathew, 'Portuguese trade on the Malabar coast', in Nihar Ranjan Ray, ed., *Western Colonial Policy*, Volume II, p. 306, where it is mentioned that 151, 746 *quintais* of pepper were exported from Malabar in the period 1586–98.

very difficult state, and is being depopulated'.[219] Quite on the contrary, the decline in official Portuguese procurement is likely to have given a fillip to other routes on which the pepper was carried. We know for example that, in the early seventeenth century, the *raja* of Cochin sent as much as 4,000 *quintais* of pepper in one of his ships to the Red Sea, while large ships from Cannanore to Mocha and Jiddah equally carried cargoes of this contraband commodity.[220] Nor were these the only ships to do so; as we have noted, the trade from Cochin to Bengal in the latter half of the sixteenth century was essentially one in pepper, as was that to the Persian Gulf and Gujarat to a large extent.

When one reads the letters of Dom Diogo Coutinho, Captain of Portuguese Cochin in the period 1614 to 1627, written to the King of Spain and Portugal, the picture of decline he presents however is a classic one. In one of these, dated January 1615, he declares:

> Cochin weeps for lack of its old nobility, because, having been the second city of this *Estado*, it is today much depopulated, and this has not improved the position of Goa, but, on the other hand, has caused a decline in the respect that the neighbouring kings had for this city, on seeing its great commerce, which was based on the carracks bound for Portugal, finished, and without them it is so miserable that the customs-house does not yield enough to even pay the ecclesiastical expenses.[221]

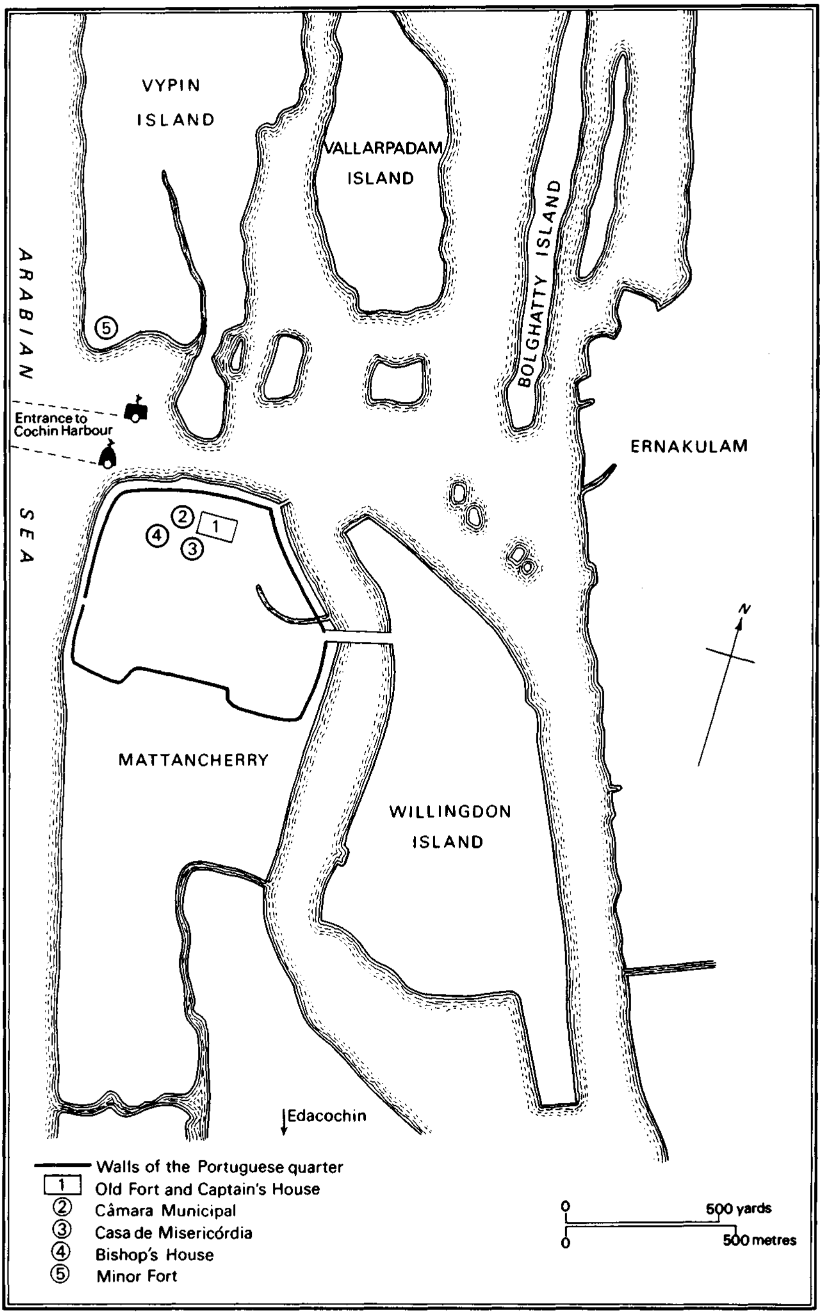
Equally, the Cochin *raja* pleaded with the King of Portugal to have the carracks put in at his port, since without them, it was a shadow of its former self. This chorus of protests was in response to the decision, put in effect in the second decade of seventeenth century, to have the *naus* of the *Carreira* depart directly from Goa for Lisbon, rather than leave via Cochin as had formerly been the case. Malabar pepper continued to be laden on these carracks though, after being carried from Cochin to Goa on smaller vessels. Where the pepper trade was concerned, it was not obvious that the new system was disadvantageous. In fact, the *casados* of Cochin could make money by freighting the pepper to Goa on their own vessels. The real disadvantage was that the new system put a damper on private trade from Cochin to Lisbon on the ships of the *Carreira*.

There is some reason even otherwise to be sceptical of the picture

219 Letter from Philip of Spain to the viceroy dated 6 February 1616, in R.A. de Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documentos Remetidos da India*, Volume III, p. 373, 388.

220 *HAG*, Monções do Reino 6A, fl. 71. A large ship from Cannanore was also encountered by the English at Mocha in 1611, on which see 'Anonymous relation (1611)', in *Letters Received*, Volume I, p. 164.

221 *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, Caixa 3 (325), Document 29, dated 25 January 1615; also see Caixa 3, Document 31.



Map 8 Cochin, *c.* 1635: a tentative reconstruction

of Cochin in decline c. 1615. For one, neither the English nor the Dutch depredations in the western Indian Ocean had reached sufficient dimensions to interfere with the trade to Chaul, Gujarat, the Red Sea and Ormuz. Diogo Coutinho himself admitted that the trade from Cochin to Goa alone (which was not one of the more important routes) was worth some 30,000 to 40,000 *xerafins* around 1615,[222] while other observers noted that the favoured position that the Cochin *casados* had under the 1585 customs-house agreement gave them the freedom to trade at far lower customs duties than their counterparts elsewhere. Further, and in addition to such licit profits, they frequently imported into Cochin the goods of others, claiming them as their own to get the benefit of reduced duties, and enjoying a share of the gain that accrued thereby.[223] Importantly too, by 1615, the trade with Bengal had been scarcely affected, and, as we have seen, this was one of the most important trading links of Cochin. The only set of navigational lines under serious threat on account of the Dutch and English was that to Melaka and Macau, as well as the limited trade to Manila that had developed in the closing decades of the sixteenth century. What was gained then by this concerted outcry, that 'Cochin was in a miserable state' and 'almost depopulated' and deserted by its populace?

To answer this question, we may note that, in the quarter-century preceding the letter quoted earlier, Cochin had been – as one of the more conspicuously prosperous cities of Portuguese India – a favoured target when financial necessities beset the *Estado*. In the late 1580s and early 1590s, the citizenry of Cochin was called upon to contribute financially in aid of Melaka, then under threat.[224] Again in 1605, when Martim Afonso de Castro's *armada* was to be sent to defend Melaka, a favoured source of funding was Cochin. The *Casa de Misercórdia* was asked for a loan well in excess of 19,000 *xerafins* on this occasion, and, in the following decade, the citizens were repeatedly asked for loans to finance the purchase of pepper cargoes for the *Carreira*.[225] For instance, when Nuno Vaz de Castel Branco,

[222] *Ibid.* Document 29. '... a fazenda q̃ estes moradores levaram a Goa importe trinta pa corenta mil xes'

[223] *BP e AD*, Évora, Códice CXVI/1/18-fls. 44–5v, section entitled 'Alfândega de Cochim'; also Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, Volume I, pp. 278–9.

[224] *BNL*, Fundo Geral, Códices 1979 and 1980, dealing with the loans made by the city of Cochin to Melaka in the 1580s and 1590s.

[225] On the loan by the *Casa de Misericórdia*, see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 28, fl. 158, letter from the King to the viceroy dated 31 March 1631.

appointed to take charge of procuring pepper cargoes, arrived at Cochin early in the second decade of seventeenth century, he found that the Royal Treasury owed local citizens in excess of 60,000 *cruzados* on account of pepper alone.[226] These sums of money, initially solicited as loans, soon had to be written off as bad debts by the lenders. The Cochin *Misericórdia* had, for example, not succeeded in recovering its money as late as 1636, and few private citizens could claim to be as influential as this institution.[227] The reputation that Cochin had for opulence worked against it in various other ways as well. After van der Hagen's fleet appeared off Malabar in 1604, it was decided to strengthen the fortifications in the port, but quite characteristically, it was thought that the finances requisite not only for the additional fortification but even cannon could be raised by levying an additional impost (or *consulado*) on commodity movements in Cochin.[228] By continually protesting their poverty, however, the settlers at Cochin succeeded in obtaining the concession for a voyage to Macau and Nagasaki, which they subsequently sold towards the cost of fortification.[229] In a situation of growing financial stringency within the *Estado*, there were good reasons to pretend to be rather poorer than one really was.

The most important concession wrested by the Cochin settlers by continually broadcasting their miserable state was quite spectacular; this was the right to send every year a ship full of their own goods, armed at the cost of the citizens (or some part thereof) to Lisbon.[230] Such a concession from the Portuguese Crown was truly extraordinary, for it meant that for a period in the 1620s and 1630s the *casados* of Cochin (as represented by their *Câmara* or Municipal Council), were the only party other than the Crown or the Portuguese East India Company whose shipping on the Cape route was sanctioned by the King of Portugal. These ships were apparently smaller than the regular carracks or *naus*, and were always designated as *navetas*. The first example of such a ship that is traceable in the records dates to

226 'Protesto de Nuno Vaz de Castelbranco', dated 2 January 1616, *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, No. 3, Document 174; also see *AHU*, Caixa 4, Document 73, letter dated 5 October 1616, on money owed to Manuel da Fonseca, resident at Chchin.

227 *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 37, fl. 205. This is a letter from Pero da Silva to the Crown, in which he regrets his present inability to pay the money back, and states that he will try and use the revenues of the Chaul customs house to this end.

228 On the *consulado*, see, *inter alia*, *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 21, fls. 27, 75. There are numerous other references to the issue in the same series of correspondence.

229 *Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, Volume V (ed. unknown), pp. 9–10.

230 *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 37, fl. 247, which mentions 'o contrato que nos annos passados se fez com a cidade de Cochim para enviar a este Reino hũa navetta cada anno...'

1628, though it is apparent that the contract between the *Câmara* of Cochin and the Portuguese Crown under which this was permitted dates back to at least the mid 1620s.[231] The *naveta* despatched in 1627/8 was called *Madre de Deus*, and it was apparently laden largely with pepper, for we hear complaints in a royal letter of the following year, that the Crown factors at Cochin were buying pepper at higher prices than that of the *naveta.* It was a condition of the contract that, having arrived at Lisbon, the pepper of the *naveta* would be unloaded and sold to the *Casa da Índia*, but would be free of the usual duties and levies that were required on other pepper. This procedure was, in practice, not free of complications, as the agent of the owners (who doubled as Captain and factor on board the *naveta*) soon discovered. There were complaints that the *Casa da Índia* underpaid them for the pepper, at 19 *cruzados* a *quintal*, as well as that there were inordinate delays in payment. The posts of Captain and of scrivener on the *naveta* were usually given to *casados* from Cochin, frequently from amongst those who had financed the voyage. The positions carried with them not only a salary (the Captain for example was paid 100 *mil reis*) but also a right to a share of the cargo-space, the captain receiving six liberty-chests for the round trip. The year following the first recorded voyage (that is to say in 1628/9), the Cochin settlers failed to raise sufficient capital to arm a *naveta*, but this was only a temporary problem.[232] In 1630, a *naveta* from Cochin arrived again at Lisbon, this time captained by Francisco Freire de Andrade. The arrival of this ship was the occasion for a protracted wrangle between the officials of the *Casa da Índia* and the agent of the *casados* of Cochin, the former insisting that duties be paid on pepper, as well as refusing to raise the price above 19 *cruzados*. The agent, on petitioning the court at Valladolid, succeeded in freeing the cargo of duties, but was unable to have the purchase price altered.[233] Partly as a consequence of this discouraging turn, and in part on account of crises on other fronts – namely the loss of the Bengal trade from 1632–3 – the Cochin settlers did not manage to send a *naveta* in the next few years. In the early 1630s, the Crown extended its concessions even further, declaring that, in principle, settlers from any part of the *Estado* could send ships on the Cape Route, with

[231] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 26, fls. 123, 349, 581.
[232] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 27, fl. 127, letter from D. Frei Luís de Brito to the King.
[233] *Biblioteca da Ajuda*, Lisbon, Códice 51–X–1, fls. 120v–122, 'Extraordinário de 9 de Dezembro de 1631', which also contains the text of the petition by Francisco Freire de Andrade.

permission from the Council of State at Goa. The viceroys were, however, quite aghast at this measure, and one of them declared that this would only cause greater losses to the Dutch, and further deplete the *Estado*'s stock of competent seamen.[234]

In the event, most other settlements in Portuguese India were not enthused by the prospect, and only the *casados* of Cochin continued to address this enterprise. In 1636, a third *naveta* was prepared with a sizeable cargo laden under the supervision of António de Pinho da Costa, widely believed to be one of the richest men then resident in the *Estado da Índia.*[235] Declaring that the pepper harvest had been too poor to permit a large cargo of that commodity, he succeeded in persuading the viceroy to permit cinnamon from Ceylon to be carried instead. Pinho da Costa had somewhat earlier served briefly as *vedor da fazenda* in Ceylon, and was clearly anxious to put the cinnamon he had privately procured there to the most profitable use.

Having dispatched this ship, the Cochin *casados* quickly requested and received permission to send a *naveta* the following year as well. This was the last of the series, and was a ship constructed at the Cochin dockyard, described by those who saw it at Lisbon as a '*naveta* new from the shipyard, made of anjelywood and excellent'.[236] Under the captaincy of Luís de Freitas de Macedo, it left Cochin on 11 February 1638, but after five months' voyage was forced to put in at Moçambique. Thereafter it reached Lisbon only in May 1639, where it was sold to the *Casa da Índia* for 9,000 *cruzados* and subsequently sent to Brazil.

The case of the *naveta* on the one hand demonstrates that Cochin's settlers were rather better off than the *casados* of most other towns of the *Estado da Índia*, and on the other hand shows clearly the importance of lobbying within the *Estado*. From the early years of the decade 1610–20, the settlers at Cochin had, through the letters of their Municipal Council, their captain and of the *vedor da fazenda*

[234] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 37, fl. 247, in which the Viceroy Pero da Silva writes that the new order 'não serviria mais q̃ de despejar este estado dessa pouca gente do mar q̃ nelle há...'

[235] António de Pinho da Costa's chequered career has never, to my knowledge, been studied in detail. We encounter him as Captain-General-elect of São Tomé de Meliapor, as *vedor da fazenda*-elect of Ceylon, and finally in the late 1640s as a member of the *Câmara Municipal* of Cochin. On his trading ventures in the last period, see *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda (1643–7), Mss. 1164, fl. 228v; also *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 37, fl. 247; Livro 40, fls. 225–v. A letter from the *Câmara* of Cochin bearing his name and dated 2 January 1649 is to be encountered in *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 61, fls. 118–19.

[236] *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, Caixa 13A [335] Document 162, dated 8 June 1639; Caixa 14 [336], Document 3, dated 21 January 1640.

resident there,[237] succeeded in portraying themselves as amongst those most seriously affected by the crisis, and consequently gained concessions of various sorts. Yet, we cannot conclude from this that the 'decline of Cochin' was a myth pure and simple for the entire period 1600–50, bearing no relation to reality. The decline, we shall argue, was real, but its causes were rather different from those set out by the settlers of the town, and its timing rather later than the decade 1610–20. Reading the oft-cited account written around 1635 of António Bocarro (who clearly had no brief to hold for the *casados* of Cochin) we encounter the following description. 'The navigations that were done from Cochin were in earlier times many and of great value, but as the principal ones were to the south, they were taken from them, and when they were made, so many ships were lost to the Dutch, English and Danes that it well seems that it must have been one of the richest lands in the world, to have lost so much and yet not be completely ruined ...'[238] Bocarro adds that the most important voyages that were made included those to Macau and Manila, '...however, the losses that the said city of Cochin had in these voyages on account of the Dutch were so many, that today years go by without a single ship [to these destinations], and when it is made it is in an oared galliot which is sold there, bringing back in gold the amount employed, which would amount to only 30,000 *xerafins*'.

An aspect highlighted in Bocarro's valuable account which lends a rather different dimension to our understanding of Cochin's decline after about 1630 is the singular importance during the heyday of Cochin of the trade with Bengal. This was a trade not only in opium, foodstuff, rice and textiles – all imported into Cochin from Bengal – but also one of the export of pepper. The textiles imported included in large measure the *khasas* and *malmals* of Bengal, which frequently found their way into the liberty chests of the carracks bound for Lisbon, as we see, for example, from the list prepared of goods recovered from the wreck of the *nau Nossa Senhora da Luz* in 1615.[239] By the time Bocarro wrote his *Livro das Plantas*, however,

237 For the letters of Diogo Coutinho to the King, see *AHU*, Caixa 3, Doc. 29, Doc. 31; for the letters of Nuno Vaz de Castel Branco, *AHU*, Caixa 3, Documents 23, 34. Also other letters, such at that of Gaspar Fernandez, S.J., *AHU*, Caixa 3, Document 180.

238 Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte 1, pp. 352–3.

239 *AHU*, Caixa 3, Document 152. Since this document is damaged as well as partially illegible, the complete list of textiles on the ship cannot be reconstructed. The partial reconstruction possible indicates the following varieties: *canikens* 1864 pieces; *beatilhas* 2516 pieces; *beirames* 4141 pieces; *khasas* 1678 pieces; *chauters* 899 pieces; besides there are smaller numbers of *baftas, pintados, toris, tafachelas,* and other varieties.

the Mughal general Qasim Khan had already captured Hughli from the Portuguese, so that *casado* trade on that line was at a low ebb. In fact, for the greater part of the 1630s the Cochin settlers had to content themselves with sending a ship or two to Pipli, a trade that – following Bocarro – was worth no more than 40,000 *xerafins* a year.[240] Doubtless trade with the Persian Gulf, Gujarat and other ports on the Konkan coast continued in the period, with the Portuguese using Jask and other neighbouring ports in place of Ormuz, which had been lost to the English and the Shah of Persia in 1621. The *real* decline that one observes in the Cochin of the 1630s is clearly traceable then to the loss of trade with Bengal in the early part of the decade.

However great the decline, we may note that the *casado* settlers were always a step ahead of it in their rhetoric, if only to draw attention to their plight and wring some concessions out of Goa and Lisbon as a result. Characteristic of this calculated exaggeration is a document of some hundred folio pages written early in the 1640s by Agostinho de Almeida Gato, *ouvidor* of the city of Cochin. We are told by him that in the early 1640s:

> one can judge the state it [Cochin] was in, from the fact that some half of its inhabitants had left, and the residential areas were all depopulated, and many matrons who had been brought up delicately and in the lap of luxury, were to be found wandering from door to door begging, while others, daughters of distinguished citizens and who had been rich and satisfied, when they could not bring themselves to do this by day as their honesty impeded them, did it by night, and even then one could scarcely find anyone to help, for everyone in general was suffering; and other women, who were not so honest or continent, would give over their bodies to anyone who gave them enough to support themselves.

He goes on to describe how the citizens concluded that they were suffering for their sins, and decided to do penance. Processions were hence held every night for over a month through the streets, '... some persons flogging themselves, others dragging themselves on their knees through the streets, others dressed in sackcloth and covered in ashes'. Almeida Gato, anxious to make his point to the King, to whom this description was sent, concluded with all gravity, 'I do not know if the city of Nineveh did as much when the prophet Jonas went there to preach, for its penitence did not endure more than three days, which was enough to placate Divine Justice...',

[240] Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte 1, p. 353. On Pipli in this period, also see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 16.

whereas Cochin passed all of forty days in like case![241] Doubtless such a description, when read by D. João IV, who had just acceded to the throne, had the desired effect, concluding as it did with the miracle that answered the prayers of those at Cochin – namely the crowning of this most bountiful prince as King of Portugal. Such rhetoric would have helped too to get a sympathetic hearing for the requests of the Cochin *casados*, including the abolition of the hated *consulado*, as well as the gift of two *viagens de Moçambique* to Cochin to improve its financial position. There can be no denying however, that, behind the hyperbole and Old Testament comparisons, the port town of Cochin was in 1640 genuinely not able to sustain anything like the level of commerce it has boasted earlier. Indeed its population, estimated in the mid 1630s at 500 *casado* households occupied only 60 per cent of the original houses in the Portuguese section of the town. The number was to drop still further between the mid 1630s and 1663.[242]

The Nayakas of Ikkeri and the Kanara trade, 1600–50

During the first two decades of the seventeenth century, while Cochin's settlers were trading profitably and protesting simultaneously their extreme poverty, the Portuguese *Estado* was engaged in a difficult struggle in the region with the Nayaka rulers of Ikkeri, more specifically with Venkatappa Nayaka [1586–1629]. We have briefly noted the expansion of Ikkeri in the late sixteenth century in an earlier chapter, and it is clear that this kingdom, though nominally subordinate to the Vijayanagara Rayas, was by 1600 the dominant power in the western section of what had in 1550 been the Vijayanagara Empire. Its only rival was Mysore to the south-east, but the Udaiyar rulers of that principality never succeeded in this period in stretching their control to extend over the Ghats, so that Mysore remained a landlocked kingdom.[243]

241 *BP e AD*, Évora, Códice CXVI/1-23, 'Triunfos Festivaes da insigne e nobre cidade Santa Crux de Cochim nas alegres novas da gloriosa acclamação...del Rey nosso Senhor Dom Ioão o qoarto de Portugal', fls. 2v, 3v–4v.

242 Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire*, p. 12, notes Bocarro's estimate of Cochin's population in the mid 1630s as five hundred *casados*, three hundred 'whites', the rest 'natives'. The estimate of the number of houses in *Cochim de baixo* is from a Dutch letter of 1670, cited in H.K. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala, 1663–1701*, The Hague, 1976, p. liii. This estimate notes that of a total of roughly 850 'original' houses, only 173 were occupied by the mid 1660s, or were even (as it turns out) habitable. On the *viagens de Moçambique*, see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 61, fls. 113–14, 118–19; however, they were told that a long queue existed.

243 On Ikkeri and Mysore in the period, see K.D. Swaminathan, *The Nayakas of Ikkeri*, Chapter 6 and 7; and Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore, 1399–1799*, Volume I, Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 45–112.

In the decades 1600–20, the power of the Nayakas of Ikkeri over the Kanara coast was tenuous and constantly under challenge. The Portuguese *Estado*, which naturally preferred to deal with smaller principalities such as Gersoppa and Gangolli rather than with an ominously large kingdom like Ikkeri, encouraged such pockets of resistance as existed.[244] The tactic initially employed by Venkatappa was to offer the Portuguese a sop, and this took the form of the agreement between Ikkeri and the Goa administration in 1608, under which the Governor D. Frei Aleixo de Meneses re-activated the customs house at Basrur (which had fallen into disuse in the mid 1570s), with duties of 6 per cent on both entry and exit, on goods from 'Goa, the northern parts, Cochin, the southern parts, and the Straits of Ormuz'.[245] Yet, only a few years later, in the viceroyalty of D. Jerónimo de Azevedo, the *Estado da Índia* found itself forced to support its client states, notably the rulers of Bangher (near Mangalore) against Ikkeri, now in alliance with the rulers of Ullal. With their garrison at Mangalore hard pressed, and an expeditionary force lost late in 1618, the Portuguese state was forced to make terms with Venkatappa early in the 1620s.[246] This left the three Portuguese fortresses on the Kanara coast – at Honawar, Basrur and Mangalore – under the shadow of Ikkeri, but the three remained vital to the well-being of the *Estado*, Honawar as the principal supplier of pepper in the half-century 1600–1650, and Basrur (whose trade we have explored in an earlier chapter, Chapter 2) as a major source of rice not only for Goa, but for Muscat, Ceylon and even Melaka.

It is evident however that Venkatappa was not content to let matters lie, and was anxious to promote as well as participate in maritime trade. Early in 1619, the Surat factors of the English company write of overtures from 'certaine Mallabars who inhabitt a country on the sea coast some 20 leagues to the souwards of Goa called Ekaree, the prince an Indian Raja [who] hath beene long in league with Portingall'. On being told that a ship could be filled with pepper in less than fifteen days, it was decided to send the *Dragon* there.[247] On the 1 March 1619, this ship arrived at Bhatkal, but was offered 150 tons of pepper at 50 rials a *khandi*. This being deemed too high, and the pepper 'worse than that of Teecoe', the ship departed

244 Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire*, pp. 6–8; *ANTT*, Manuscritos do Convento da Graça, Tomo III (Caixa 2), fls. 151, 193, 242, *passim*.

245 *HAG*, Provisões dos Vice-Reis, No. 2 [1604–1609], Mss. 1184, fls. 60v–65, 78.

246 António Bocarro, *Década XIII da História da Índia*, 2 Volumes, Lisbon, 1876, Volume I, pp. 182–3; Volume II, pp. 470–2; *HAG*, Reis Vizinhos, Mss. No. 969, fl. 58; A da Silva Rego, ed., *Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, Volume VIII, Document 21, pp. 25–8; Volume IX, Document 60, pp. 340–5.

247 Surat to the Company, February 9 and 15 1619, *EFI [1618–21]*, pp. 56, 60; Voyage of Captain Bonner, pp. 69–70.

from the port without conducting trade. The English at Surat were approached in the following years as well, but this experience had made them distrustful, so that they wrote to London in April 1621, 'Batacala noe doubt yeildeth store of pepper, but the power of the Portugalls restrayneth the sale of it unto the King of Spayne's subjects onely'. Again in November 1623, the President of the English Council at Surat wrote of how he had received letters of invitation from the King to whom 'Batecala' belonged, offering '2000 candies of pepper there in readinesse'. Yet, it was decided that the advantages of the trade were outweighed by the risks, as Bhatkal was far too close to Goa.[248]

Besides soliciting English trade, Venkatappa had in the early 1620s entered into contract with the *Estado* to supply a certain amount of pepper every year, though at a price considerably higher than that of Cochin. This trade was prosecuted by means of Saraswat traders, whom he used not only as intermediaries but as ambassadors to Goa when the occasion demanded it.[249] In December 1621 for instance, he sent Vithala Sinai, one of his favourites, to Goa to solicit a *cartaz* for a ship that he intended to send to Mecca (i.e. Jiddah) from Bhatkal. The ship, called 'Ramabada' in Portuguese records, was not a large one, being just 300 *khandis* burthen. Its *nakhuda* was a *navayat* called Hossain, clearly from the community at Bhatkal.[250] Venkatappa, as well as his successors at Ikkeri, was permitted not only these *cartazes* but the importation of a certain number of horses every year toll-free into their lands. One does not know, of course, whether the ship and the cargo on it were wholly or partly owned by the Nayaka and financed out of his treasury, ambiguities which we have noted existed in the case of the Sultans of Golconda as well. Still, two things emerge from the documents of the period: first, that Venkatappa was actively exercised on the question of maritime affairs as well as on relations with the Portuguese *Estado*; secondly, that he regarded the trade with the Portuguese as dispensable and was seeking ways of limiting their influence through the use of their European rivals.

The *Estado da Índia*, on the other hand, was committed firmly to its fortresses on the Kanara coast; growing importance was attached

[248] Thomas Kerridge to the Company, 10 April 1621, *EFI [1618–21]*, p. 249; Consultation at Surat, November 19 1623, *EFI [1622–23]*, p. 323.

[249] *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda (1613–21) Mss. No. 1159, fls. 168v–170, dated 16 January 1621; *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda (1627–31), Mss. 1161, fls. 1,2, *passim*.

[250] *HAG*, Livro de Consultas, Mss. 1043, fls. 72–v; also *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda (1618–25), Mss. 1160, fls. 270v–271v, where there are complaints about Venkatappa's pepper trade to Mecca.

in particular to Basrur. Here, as in Honawar, a small settlement of *casados* was already in existence in the 1570s. There was a difference between the two settlements though, for while the Honawar *casados* were, as Disney notes, 'maintained at government expense since there was little opportunity for them to make an independent living', this same was not true of those resident at Basrur.[251] Some of the Basrur settlers, who included some thirty-five Portuguese and *mestiço* households, owned ships and were active traders; in the 1630s, for example, the Portuguese *casados* of the port had seven or eight galliots of up to 300 *khandis* burthen each.[252] Besides, we encounter several references to the independent shipowning and trade of the Saraswat merchants of Basrur early in the seventeenth century, whether to Muscat, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf, or to Goa and the Malabar ports. Moreover, as has been noted in the context of an earlier discussion of the coastal trade, rice from Basrur (both fine and coarse, but particularly the former) was transported frequently at the instance of the *Estado da Índia* to destinations ranging from Sri Lanka and Melaka, to Moçambique, on occasion via Goa or Cochin. One also notes other instances, for example, of a *cartaz* granted by the *Estado* to one Sandegaro Chatim in 1621; the navicert was issued for a *naveta* of 800 *khandis* burthen, carrying over a hundred and seventy persons on board besides five pieces of artillery.[253]

Not only rice, but pepper was exported from Basrur, by private merchants, by the Nayaka, and by the pepper contractors of the Portuguese Crown (this last to supplement the pepper procured at Honawar), and António Bocarro writing in the 1630s lists among its imports coral, seed-pearls, rubies, tutenage, horses and elephants, and among its exports, besides rice and pepper, textiles from over the Ghats.[254] The importance of this port, and its northerly neighbour Honawar, prompted the *Estado da Índia* in the late 1620s to enter into a rather reckless adventure in the region. On the death of Venkatappa Nayak of Ikkeri, no clear succession had been established. The Portuguese decided to throw their weight firmly behind Venkatappa's son-in-law, Virappa (one of the two contenders), and received in exchange rights to the peninsula of Gangolli (overlooking Basrur), and its rich rice lands. However, this policy – successful in the short term – soon proved counter-productive. On the eventual accession of the other contender, Virabhadra Nayaka, to the throne,

[251] Disney, Twilight of the Pepper Empire, pp. 4–5.
[252] António Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte 1, pp. 317–18.
[253] *HAG*, Livro de Consultas, Mss. 1043, fls. 65–5v.
[254] Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte 1, p. 317.

the peninsula became a major bone of contention. Reluctant to give it up, while at the same time unable to make it sufficiently secure to justify the abandoning of the other fort at Basrur (across the mouth of the Kundapur estuary), the *Estado* vacillated for two decades until finally expelled from both fortresses by Ikkeri forces in 1653–4.[255]

The policy followed during the succession struggle at Ikkeri meant that Virabhadra, though on the face of it at peace with Goa, was in fact anxious to harass the *Estado* to the extent possible. The treaty of peace between the two, signed on 5 April 1633, obliged Ikkeri to 'free all the rice, and all other supplies from its lands and ports for this city [Goa] and other fortresses of the *Estado*', but Virabhadra soon imposed a tax on rice from Basrur destined for Muscat, enforcing this through his local governor.[256] He felt justified in breaking other clauses in the treaty as well, since the Goa authorities for their part found themselves unable to adhere to certain uncomfortable clauses, particularly the section stating 'that the *Estado* will be obliged to buy from the King Virabhadra Nayaka every year 350 *khandis* of pepper for each one of the carracks that is to leave for Portugal, at a price of 22 *pagodas* a *khandi.*' Like his predecessor, Venkatappa, he continued to encourage other Europeans to frequent his ports, and it was this that brought the fleet of Captain John Weddell of Courteen's Association to Bhatkal in 1637.

Courteen's Association, formed on the basis of a charter granted by Charles I of England in December 1635, had been the reason for 'deep misgivings' at the Court of the English East India Company, which saw this interloper as a serious threat, particularly after the charter was renewed in June 1637.[257] In fact, two of the most important employees of the Association in the period, John Weddell and Nathaniel Mountney, had left English Company service on account of their unhappiness over the truce with the *Estado da Índia* signed in February 1635. Weddell was only too happy then to enter into conflict with the *Estado*, and more so if it would embarrass the Company factors at Surat. The latter had already been greatly discomfited by the activities of one Captain Quail, who also had a commission from Charles I, and in his ship the *Seahorse* captured several Asian-owned vessels in the Arabian sea in 1631–2, prudently using – with fine irony – the sobriquet Robin Goodefellowe on such

255 See P.S.S. Pissurlencar, ed., *Assentos do Conselho do Estado [1644–58]*, Volume III, p. 100–1, *passim.*

256 Judice Biker, ed., *Colecção de Tratados*, Volume I, pp. 270–2, 299–302.

257 On Courteen's Association see K.N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, p. 73; Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, pp. 69–70.

occasions.[258] It was feared that Weddell would continue to act in much the same tradition. In the event, the activities of the factors of Courteen's Association proved far more innocuous. We learn from the journal of Peter Mundy, one of those on Weddell's fleet, that after visiting Goa, where they tried to trade, the fleet arrived in Bhatkal in February 1637. Here, they anchored off the river mouth, and had to wait several days for permission to trade, which eventually arrived from the court at Ikkeri.[259] Since a disagreement arose subsequently on the terms (the English wanting to purchase pepper in exchange for lead, and the local traders demanding rials of eight), an embassy was sent to the court. Towards the end of February 1637, this embassy succeeded in obtaining a *farman* from the Nayaka, and a factory was settled there under one Anthony Verworthy, with two English assistants, and a Dutch purser, interestingly enough, called Pieter van Dam.

The Courteen factory at Bhatkal did not last long, partly on account of the poor financial position of the Association, and also because the Dutch purser smothered the remaining factors one night in their sleep. In 1638, Weddell was said to have procured a cargo of over 150,000 lbs. of pepper for his ship, the *Planter*, but whether this was from Bhatkal or from Karwar and Rajapur further north (where the Courteenians traded too) is unclear.[260] The activities of the Association on the Kanara coast continued however through the 1640s, and there are occasional references to their ships putting in at Karwar and Rajapur, even though the Bhatkal factory no longer existed after 1638. The decline of the Association was rapid however after Weddell's death, in 1639, on his way back to Europe. The occasional ship continued to arrive in Asia, but the battle was a losing one. In January 1646, the English President at Surat remarked of the Courteenians in India that, 'they have scarcely credit enough to buy clothes to keep their bodies warme, although the climate requires not many'.[261] At the end of that year, the Courteen factors at Karwar offered the English Company at Surat their fortified factory site for a price, but the offer was turned down 'in regard it would have been a certaine charge... and happily might not have proved proporcionably

[258] *Mary* at Swally Hole to the Company, 9 December 1631, *EFI [1630–33]*, p. 180; Surat to the Company, 24 April 1632, *EFI 1630–33]*, pp. 217, 226.

[259] See R.C. Temple, ed., *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667*, Volume III, Part 1, London, 1919, pp. 72–3.

[260] Company to Surat, 16 March 1683, *EFI [1637–41]*, p. 57.

[261] President Breton etc at Swally to the Company, 3rd January 1646, *EFI [1646–50]*, p. 8, cited in Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade*, p. 70.

advantagious'.[262] This proved a wise decision in the event since in January 1650, the factory and fort were seized by the local government (the area having fallen under Bijapur rule late in the 1630s) since the factors had not paid their rent for over four years.[263]

This brief and somewhat fruitless episode of Courteen's Association and its factories on the Kanara coast is of some importance not so much for its own sake but for the light it sheds on the policy of the Ikkeri Nayakas towards maritime commerce. To begin with, it emerges that these rulers clearly preferred Bhatkal to all other ports for their own use, and this is amply demonstrated *inter alia* by the careful maintenance of the overland route from Bhatkal to Ikkeri via Hadvalli, Hogvadi pass, and Hallibagal.[264] Three letters written by Virabhadra Nayaka to the Courteen factors in March 1637 are particularly of interest, showing his anxiety to promote trade as well as his own direct participation in it, particularly where pepper was concerned, through his agent 'Mange' Nayak. There can be little doubt that the Nayakas of Ikkeri were for the greater part disaffected with the *Estado* and anxious to promote alternatives. As it turns out, however, neither the Dutch nor the English Companies were willing to commit themselves to trading in the area, even as late as 1650. The occasional passing fleet might put in to Basrur, Karwar or Mangalore to trade, but no continuing form of relations was carried on.[265] In the late 1630s and early 1640s, the attention that the Nayakas of Ikkeri could devote to these issues diminished temporarily, on account of their own insecurity in the face of the Bijapur threat.[266] Once this was settled, and with the accession of Sivappa Nayaka in 1645, there was renewed interest in developing maritime trade, the barrier to which was clearly identified as being the *Estado da Índia.* Far from being thalassophobic, the Nayakas then set about systematically tackling this problem, and it was typical of their policy to enter into negotiations with the VOC almost a year before actually expelling

262 President Breton and Thomas Merry at Swally Marine to the Company, 26 February 1647, *EFI [1646–50]*, pp. 106–7. Also see *Ibid*, Introduction, pp. x-xii.

263 Edward Lloyd's account of the seizure of the Karwar factory, *EFI [1646–50]*, pp. 341–2.

264 The overland route from Bhatkal to Ikkeri is described in detail in Peter Mundy's account, for which see Temple, ed., *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, Volume III, Part 1, pp. 75–8, as well as Map I in the same volume.

265 See for example *EFI [1646–50]*, pp. 76, 162–3, 283 *passim*.

266 For details of this, see Swaminathan, *The Nayakas of Ikkeri*, Chapter VII; Hayavadana Rao, *History of Mysore*, Volume I, pp. 118–30; *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 41, fls. 25v–26v; Livro 45, fl. 205.

the Portuguese from their coastal fortresses.[267] If they failed in the half-century 1600–50 to raise Bhatkal to its earlier levels of prosperity, the Kanara trade had certainly not fallen into decline in the period. Other ports and regions in the vicinity had not been as fortunate, whether Goa in the north, or Cochin to the south.

The trade in Malabar and Kanara pepper, 1600–1650

It has already been noted on more than one occasion that the presence of Kanara pepper in the cargoes of the carracks plying the *Carreira da Índia* is perceptible from the mid 1560s on, until which point the pepper sent to Lisbon had been largely from Malabar, supplemented by the pepper collected on occasion at Melaka.[268] In the period after 1600, the pepper from Melaka dwindled in importance for the Portuguese, and there are only five instances of it forming a part of Portuguese cargoes on the *Carreira da Índia* in the period 1612–34.[269] This was only natural, since – even before the fall of Melaka in 1641 – much of the pepper grown on the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra either went to China and the Bay of Bengal littoral, or found its way into the holds of Dutch and English East India Company ships destined for Europe. Almost the entire import of pepper by the English Company into London, which in the period 1613 to 1636 averaged 500 tonnes annually, was drawn from the Malay-Indonesian region, as was the greater part of the pepper sold by the VOC in Amsterdam up to 1640.[270] In the first half of the seventeenth century, the *Estado da Índia*, the third significant supplier of pepper for European consumption, was faced with the problem of balancing two sources of pepper, Kanara and Malabar, and of deciding where their procurement drives should concentrate.

[267] J. E Heeres, ed., *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*, Deel II [1650–1675], The Hague, 1931, pp. 104–14; this also contains the text of a treaty signed between Sivappa Nayaka and Leendert Janssen, dated 28 March 1657. The Dutch finally settled a factory at Basrur only as late as 1668; on this see H.K. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, Introduction, p. lii. There are letters from the Basrur factory written in the 1670s preserved at the *Algemeen Rijksarchief*, The Hague, for example OB, VOC 1308, fls. 521–3, letter from Robert Lintsay at 'Bartseloor' to Daniel van Benesse at Cannanore, 19 November 1675, as also a report by the same factor, dated 7 December 1678, VOC. 1333, fls. 460–71.

[268] See *BP e AD*, Évora, Códice CXVI/1-18, fls. 43–3v. 'No anno de 1565, sendo Viso Rey Dom Antão de Noronha se descobrio nesta costa do Canará...' etc.

[269] Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire*, Appendix 2.2, p. 162.

[270] K.N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, p. 148, Table V. Also K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, pp. 73–81.

Such a statement appears to carry with it the implication that the Portuguese *Estado* suffered from an embarrassment of pepper, and this would seem to some paradoxical given the dwindling amounts of pepper sent on the *Carreira da Índia* to Europe in the period. As early as 1622, it was estimated that the Portuguese supplied no more than 20 per cent of the European pepper market, the remaining 80 per cent falling into the hands of the Dutch and the English Companies.[271] If pepper was to be had so freely, what was it that constrained the Portuguese from having a larger share of the market?

The answer, as Anthony Disney has convincingly demonstrated, lay in the financing of the pepper trade.[272] In order to get together a sufficient cargo of pepper, and to reach even such a target as 20,000 heavy *quintais* (which is to say about 1,200 tonnes) – a target that was, incidentally, never attained by the Portuguese in the first half of the seventeenth century – the treasury at Goa required capital in advance. This was a fact reiterated *ad nauseum* in the letters from the viceroys at Goa to Europe, without its having the slightest effect on the councils in Spain.[273] In the absence of such a *capital prevenido*, the authorities at Goa had two choices. They could await the pepper monies on the fleet from Lisbon and then hurriedly attempt to employ the capital in pepper and other goods, or they could try and raise capital locally to tide things over. Local sources were limited, and the *Estado*'s lack of solvency too well-known, so that creditors fought shy of making such loans. An anonymous account from 1610 declares that the debts of the Royal Treasury in India amounted to over 600,000 *cruzados*, and that these included 160,000 *pardaus* which

[271] Pieter van Dam, *Beschrijvinge van de Oost Indische Compagnie*, ed. F.W. Stapel, The Hague, 1927–39, Deel I, Part II, p. 261, cited in Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, p. 74.

[272] Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire*. However, Disney's attempt (pp. 50–5) to link this to the financial crisis in the budgets of the *Estado da Índia* has been criticised recently by A. Teodoro de Matos in his paper 'The financial situation of the state of India during the Philippine period, 1581–1635', in De Souza, ed., *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions*, pp. 90–101. Yet Matos's own view that the *Estado* continued to be solvent and show surpluses, based on his examination of the *orçamentos*, is open to criticism as well. For one, these budgets do not represent actual collections and expenditures, but some combination of 'ideal' and 'typical' revenue and expenditures in any given year. Moreover, given the *actual* liquidity crisis faced by the *Estado*'s administration in the period, testified to in myriad documents, it is difficult to see how seriously one can take the *orçamento* figures.

[273] *HAG*, Monções do Reino 16A, fl. 129; Monções 19A, fl. 194 etc. Also see *AHU*, Caixas da Índia, Caixa 3, Doc. 23, letter from Nuno Vaz de Castel Branco to the King, dated 30 January 1615; *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 37, fl. 145.

had been borrowed in the early seventeenth century on account of pepper alone.[274] Given this general reluctance on the part of private citizens to loan the government money, successive viceroys and governors in the course of the seventeenth century were forced to turn increasingly to such persons and institutions as could not refuse them. Hence, while on the one hand money was 'borrowed' from the estates of dead persons, another favoured set of targets were the See churches and the *Casas de Misericórdia* of Goa and Cochin. These sources, though large, were not inexhaustible, and by the early 1640s the bottom of the barrel had to be scraped and recourse taken to the churches of the major religious orders at Goa (such as the Order of St. Francis) to finance purchases.[275]

In a sense, the formation of the Portuguese East India Company in the late 1620s was a direct response to this liquidity crisis. Equally, the decision taken to dissolve the Company as early as April 1633 reflected the failure of this mode of solution. The demise of the Company – its last cargoes were sent to Europe in 1634 – signalled the beginnings of a new crisis in the Portuguese pepper trade to Europe. In the last year of trade under Company control (a brief period from 1630–4), just over 530 tonnes (or 9,000 heavy *quintals*) had been sent to Lisbon, of which over two-thirds was the pepper of Kanara, the rest being from Cochin.[276] There then followed a period beginning from 1637 and ending in 1640 in which only five ships were permitted to leave for Lisbon, on account of the Dutch blockade of Goa. In 1637, the only ship to leave Goa was the carrack *Nossa Senhora de Oliveira*, while in the following year the only ship to leave Goa (also *Oliveira*), arrived at Lisbon in May 1639, at roughly the same time as the *naveta Madre de Deus* from Cochin. Again in 1640, arrivals at Lisbon comprised only a galleon and a *naveta.* Things did not improve much in the 1640s, with several years in which no arrivals were recorded at all at Lisbon from India.[277]

The Portuguese did however continue to send pepper on the few ships that did go, both on private and Crown accounts. Regarding the Crown's trade in pepper, we know that, in October 1645, 30,000

274 *BP e AD*, Évora, Códice CXVI/1-18, fls. 46–7, 48–8v.

275 *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda, (1643–7), Mss. 1164, fl. 147v.

276 Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire*, p. 162, Appendix 2.2.

277 *BM* Additional Manuscript 20902, fls. 148–54. There is an extensive literature on the blockades, including N. Mac Leod, *De Oost Indische Compagnie als Zeemogendheid in Azië*, 2 Volume, Rijswijk 1927, Deel II, pp. 98–105, 107–13, 119–26, *passim.* Also see C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese India in the mid-Seventeenth Century*, Delhi, 1980, pp. 39–40.

xerafins in cash were sent from Goa to Cochin to facilitate the purchase of pepper, while, in February of the following year, 20,000 *xerafins* were despatched on the same route. Again, between May and October 1646, 14,000 *São Tomés* (each worth 1.2 *xerafins*) were sent for the same purpose, while in January 1647 it was decided at the *Conselho da Fazenda* in Goa to send 200 to 300 *maunds* of opium to Cochin to help in the pepper procurement.[278] Behind many of these schemes was António de Pinho da Costa, whom we have already encountered as an influential entrepreneur based at Cochin, and one of those responsible for fitting out the *navetas de Cochim* in the late 1630s. The continuing participation of the Crown in the trade was a cause for conflict among policymakers, for there were many who were all for innovating on this front. On the accession of D. João IV to the throne in December 1640, he was advised to promulgate an ordinance freeing the trade on the Cape route to all private Portuguese who might want to partake of it. In a sense, this was the logical culmination of the policies of the 1630s, under which the *navetas* from Cochin were permitted to sail to Lisbon. The order, dated 12 December 1642, which was eventually promulgated, was a half-hearted one.[279] Persons resident in Portugal were permitted to arm ships to India, and private individuals resident at both ends of the line were permitted to send pepper as freight goods on board the ships of not only other private individuals but even of the Crown. However, the pepper would, on arrival in Lisbon, be purchased by the *Casa da Índia* at a determined price. Under this new regime, we know that on one occasion in the 1640s four ships owned by private parties in Portugal were sent out from the estuary of the Tejo, three to Goa and the fourth to Ceylon. Yet of these four, all of which left Lisbon in April 1645 only one, *Nossa Senhora dos Remédios*, ever returned, and that in July 1646. The high rate of failure clearly put dampers on the participation of private enterprise, as we hear little more of such despatches in the succeeding years.[280]

A second reform, mooted together with this one, was to substitute the royal monopoly trade in pepper – which had been at least partly abandoned with the edict of 1642 – with a monopoly trade in Ceylonese cinnamon. But this entailed opposition from mariners as well as officials, both of whom had carried a good deal of the commodity traditionally in their liberty chests; it was decided in 1647 to solve this problem by the somewhat drastic expedient of abolishing

[278] *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda [1643–47], Mss. 1164, fls. 159, 175v, 211v, 228v.
[279] *HAG*, Registo de Alvarás e Cartas Régias [1610–45], Mss. 2358, fls. 348–9.
[280] *BM*, Additional Manuscript 20902, fl. 150v.

the liberty chest altogether on the ships of the *Carreira*, compensating the losers by means of a rise in their salaries. A furore ensued in the wake of this decision, so that two years later it was decided to abandon the new regime in favour of the old formula.[281] The monopoly on cinnamon thus did not last for more than a few years.

There can be little doubt that, in the period 1635–50, the average annual procurement of pepper by the Portuguese on account of cargoes despatched on the *Carreira da Índia* could have scarcely been a fraction of the 450 tonnes averaged in the period from 1630 to 1634 when the *Companhia de comércio* was in charge. The figure that one visualises then would compare very oddly indeed with the annual production of pepper at Malabar and Kanara, estimated in about 1605 as in excess of 16,000 tonnes.[282] To explain where the bulk of the pepper went, we must turn now to the trade carried on in the coastal and overland networks, as well as on the high seas, not only by the Dutch, Danes and English but by the Asian traders. In the early years of the seventeenth century, Asian-owned ships from Malabar and Kanara routinely carried cargoes of pepper to diverse consuming markets and entrepôts, on occasion with the connivance of the factors and officials of the *Estado da Índia*. Major participants included, besides the *raja* of Cochin (who, in 1603, is reported to have sent over 4,000 *quintals* of pepper to Jiddah), the traders based at Calicut and the Ali Rajas of Cannanore, all of whom were entitled to a certain number of *cartazes* under treaties with Goa. The Samudri *raja* was entitled to five navicerts for ships ranging from 500 to 600 *khandis* burthen, while the actual record of *cartazes* issued to the Ali Rajas in the period 1618–21 indicates that their ships were frequently in the 800 to 1,000 *khandi* range.[283] Besides, we know that in the early 1620s Venkatappa Nayaka of Ikkeri regularly sent ships to the Red Sea, laden with pepper, and carrying *cartazes* issued by the

281 *BM*, Additional Manuscript 20902, fls. 151v–152. '... e não terem liberdades, o qual durou athe o anno de 1648'. Also see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 57, fl. 189; Livro 59, fl. 60. The order of revocation is found in *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 60, fls. 237–8v, dated 22 March 1649.

282 'Relatório sobre o trato da pimenta ...', published in *DUP*, III, p. 351.

283 *HAG*, Livro de Consultas, Mss. 1043, fls. 41v, 64–5, 104v–105, 121–v. Pearson, in his *Coastal Western India*, pp. 145–7, lists the *cartazes* contained in this volume, but fails–for some reason–to mention several pertaining to Cannanore. These include: (i) dated 7 March 1618, for a ship of 800 *khandis* to Mecca (mentioned by Pearson); (ii) dated 28 January 1619, for a ship of unspecified size, bound for Mecca; (iii) dated 10 February 1620, for a ship of 500 *khandis* for Mecca; (iv) dated 12 February 1621, a ship of 1,000 *khandis* for Mecca.

viceroys and governors of the *Estado da Índia.*[284] It is clear however that these 'Royal' ships – while certainly conspicuous – were not the only ones to carry pepper in these waters. The so-called 'navios pimenteiros' operating on and from the west coast and supplying Gujarat, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea were owned by numerous other traders as well. These included both private Portuguese and officials of the *Estado da Índia*; two of the comptrollers in charge of procuring pepper at Cochin early in the seventeenth century, Garcia de Melo and Nuno Vaz de Castel Branco, were both involved extensively in this illegal trade, as the documents of inquiries conducted against them testify.[285] Furthermore, in the 1630s and 1640s, some of the prominent suppliers of the *Estado* on the Kanara coast, such as Rama Kini, were said to be involved in the trade themselves, smuggling pepper in small craft along the coast to Gujarat and Konkan, as indeed were some officials of the short-lived *Companhia de Comércio.*[286] Besides, prominent traders, such as Virji Vorah of Surat, maintained factors at Calicut, and it was reported in the early 1640s that he traded pepper against opium and cotton sent from Gujarat. In fact, Virji Vorah even offered the English and the Dutch companies quantities of pepper at Surat if they should so desire.[287]

One of the curious aspects of the trade in pepper in the first half of the seventeenth century is the part played by the Konkan ports – such as Rajapur, Chaul and Dabhol. These ports were frequently characterised in the Portuguese documents of the period as the chief centres of operation of the 'pimenteiros'. For instance, the Flemish private trader Jacques de Coutre, in a memorandum to the Conde de Linhares on the eve of the latter's departure for Goa in 1628, insisted that the over-riding priority of the *Estado*'s government was the extermination of these centres of 'illegal' private trade – surely an odd piece of advice from a man who had traded extensively himself in none too savoury circumstances.[288] It was said by others that the trading community in these ports – which largely fell under the

[284] *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda [1618–25], fls. 270v–271v.

[285] *HAG*, Monções do Reino 19B, fls. 637–v, 'Devaça contra Nuno Vas de Castelbranco. '; *AHU,* Caixas da Índia, No. 1 (323), Document No. 101.

[286] *HAG*, Monções do Reino 17, fl. 216, also Monções do Reino 19A, fl. 75. On pepper to the Persian Gulf, also see Monções do Reino 17, fls. 25, 68; Monções do Reino 18, fl. 104, *passim.*

[287] President and Council at Surat to the Company, 4 January 1639, *EFI [1637–41]*, pp. 110–11; Roelofsz., *Vestiging*, pp. 74, 88–90.

[288] *ANTT*, Manuscrito do Convento da Graça, VI-F, fls. 52v–5v, 'Advertências de Jaques de Couto ao Conde', dated 29 December 1628, especially fls. 53–4v, 56v.

control of Bijapur – comprised in great measure renegade Portuguese, including some who had converted to Islam.[289] In the 1630s and the 1640s, both the Dutch and the English Companies exerted themselves to procure pepper at the ports and inland marts of this area, immediately north of Goa, with English Company procurement at Raibagh and Rajapur continuing through these decades, and the VOC trading in the main through Vengurla. At the same time, Virji Vorah was an important participant in the pepper trade of this region, trading in particular from Dabhol.[290] Knowing as we do that the area where pepper was produced never extended at any point in time north of Karwar (at the southern extremity of Portuguese Goa), it follows that the pepper exported from these Konkan ports must have been carried both overland and by coastal craft from the producing regions. We find references in 1636 in the English records to the 'frequent resort of Malabar merchants to Dabhol', and this appears equally true of a whole host of other ports in the vicinity, including Kharepatan and Rajapur.[291] In addition to the direct export from Malabar and Kanara to west Asia then, of which an excellent example is a 'Great Ship' from Cannanore encountered by the English in 1644 on its return to Malabar from the Red Sea, with over 500 men on board, and laden with a cargo estimated at over 200,000 Mughal rupees,[292] there was a good deal of pepper carried by the entrepôt trade, wherein the commodity was brought to the Konkan ports and re-exported thence.

Naturally to estimate the extent of this trade in tonnes is scarcely possible, given the nature of documentation available for the period, but its vigour is undeniable, this being equally true of the overland and coastal trade from Malabar to the south-east coast as well. Here the traditional route of the Palaghat gap continued to be in use, with the pepper passing through the Tanjavur country to be exported from ports such as Nagapattinam, Porto Novo and Tarangambadi, where it was purchased by the Companies (notably the Danes and the English) as well as by Asian traders. Dutch factors spoke in the 1620s

[289] *ANTT*, Manuscritos da Livraria 1699, Chronicle of the Order of St. Augustine.

[290] 'Monumenta historiae Indiae', *Journal of the Bombay Historical Society*, Volume I, No. 2, September 1928, pp. 201–5.

[291] Instruction from Surat to Thomas Pitt proceeding to Dabhol, March 5 1636, *EFI [1634–36]*, p. 176.

[292] This ship from Cannanore was attacked and burnt by the English Company vessel the *Hind* in a curious incident, for details of which see *EFI [1642–45]*, pp. 179–81. The Cannanore vessel had lowered its sails and taken some Englishmen on board, who subsequently entered into an altercation with the members of its crew. Also see the letter from President Breton etc. at Swally to the Company, 28 November 1644, *EFI [1642–45]*, p. 213.

of a town called 'Peta' in the Nayaka principality of Tanjavur, which served as a clearing house for the pepper which arrived there from Malabar, and was then redistributed.[293] The other form the trade took was along the coastline, and there is no lack of evidence showing how the pepper of Kollam and Kayamkulam found its way to Tuticorin and other ports of the Fishery Coast. This was a trade in which the *padres* of the Society of Jesus were allegedly extensively involved; there are even reports in the Portuguese *Estado*'s documents to the effect that the Jesuits actively obstructed official Portuguese procurement of pepper in the southern reaches of Malabar (the Venad kingdom) for fear that it would impinge on their own trade.[294]

Besides these Asian and private Portuguese traders (though we may note that the Jesuits of the region were often Spaniards, French and Italian), the Dutch and the English companies too became involved in procuring pepper in this area as the decades wore on. We have noted that for a great part of the period 1600–40, the pepper despatched by the Companies to Europe was of Malay and Indonesian origin. On occasion, the English managed to purchase southern Indian pepper, as one gathers from a Dutch report of 1628 that the English ships *Palsgrave*, *Dolphin* and *Discovery* which had just left Surat for home were 'mostly laden with Malabar pepper'.[295] This was an exception though, and the Company's access to Malabar and Kanara pepper continued to be limited and occasional for much of the 1630s, despite the fact that the Anglo-Portuguese agreement of February 1635 had stipulated that the Portuguese would sell the English 3,000 *quintais* of pepper annually, against copper. In fact, with the departure in 1635 of Viceroy Linhares, who had signed this agreement, his successor showed little inclination to put it into effect.[296] For the remainder of the 1630s and the 1640s the English

293 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, 'Dagh-Register Paliacatta', 20 November 1623 to 28 November 1625, fls. 179–211v, especially fl. 199.

294 *HAG*, Monções do Reino 19D, fls. 1222–v, 1223–v, letters from an unknown Portuguese in Travancore to António Mõnis Barreto at Cochin, where one finds such remarks as, 'os padres da Companhia (que) fizerã todo possivel pera se não pezar pimenta nenhũa'.

295 J.E. Heeres, ed., *DR Batavia, Anno 1624–29*, The Hague, 1896, p. 336, entry dated 28 June 1628.

296 The text of the agreement is to be found in Judice Biker, ed., *Colecção de Tratados*, Volume I, pp. 265–7. There was an ongoing feud between Pero da Silva, Linhares's successor, and Linhares, for details of which see, *inter alia*, *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 38, fls. 140–80, as also C.R. Boxer, 'José Pinto Pereira, Vedor da Fazenda Geral da Índia e Conselheiro Ultramarino del Rei Dom João IV', *Anais da Academia Portuguesa de História*, VII, 1942, pp. 75–118.

Company tried two alternative strategies, neither with great success. The first was to procure pepper at Rajapur, Cannanore, Cochin and other ports using its own ships, which would trade at these places without formally settling a factory there. In the case of Cochin, they achieved limited success through cooperation with some of the *casados* settled in that port in the 1640s. This strategy was used on the Kanara and Konkan coasts, particularly after 1637–8, when the Courteenians had already shown that possibilities existed in this direction. The limited success of this sort of venture, and the prevalent pessimism concerning its development in the late 1640s is demonstrated, however, by the fact that the Company even turned down an offer to acquire a factory at Karwar in 1647, though the costs involved were not high.[297] The alternative strategy was to procure the commodity on the Surat market, as was done for the cargoes of 1628 mentioned earlier, or using as an intermediary a merchant of Surat. The Surat trader Virji Vorah was approached to this end, but the attempt did not prove a great success, even though on one occasion, in 1643, Virji's factor at Calicut procured some 550 sacks of pepper for the Company.[298] Until 1650, then, the English Company, despite numerous individual forays involving ports ranging from Dabhol to Basrur and Cochin, had not succeeded in making inroads of any significant dimensions into the pepper trade of Malabar and Kanara. This was in sharp contrast to the marked success enjoyed by the VOC in the period after 1640 in this regard.

The early visits of the Dutch to Malabar were less than successful. Although several agreements were signed, in particular with the Samudri *raja*, none of these could be followed up by the despatch of vessels, or military support (in which the Malabar ruler evinced a keen interest). Indeed, following a visit by Pieter van den Broecke to Calicut in October 1616, almost a decade passed before the Dutch Company made its next foray to the south-west Indian coast. This was again a fly-by-night operation, for, although a treaty was signed between Hermaan van Speult, the VOC representative, and the Samudri *raja* on 3 January 1626, the Dutch had little hope of enforcing or putting into effect this agreement. The treaty had stipulated that all pepper grown in the region would be handed over

297 Breton and Merry at Swally Marine to the Company, 26 February 1647, *EFI [1646–50]*, pp. 106–7.

298 Edward Knipe on the *Crispina* to the Company, 18 June 1643, *EFI [1642–45]*, pp. 107–8; also see pp. 86–9, President Fremlen etc. at Swally to the Company, 17 January 1643.

to the Dutch at a fixed price, as would all ginger, with VOC trade additionally being freed of all import and export duties.[299] Since no trading vessels of the Company put in at Calicut between the date this agreement was signed and 1633, it remained for all intents and purposes a dead letter. The failure to trade in this period is clearly explicable in terms of the continuing weakness of the Dutch financial and logistic position. With improvements in the early 1630s (and with trade on other fronts at a low ebb, freeing some shipping and capital) the fleets sent from Batavia to Surat in 1633 and 1634 were asked to put in at the Malabar ports and trade there, without however setting up factories.[300] Encouraged by the limited success of this type of trade, a variant was continued in the period after 1636, when Anthonio van Diemen became Governor-General of the council of the VOC. Under his regime, the annual blockade of Goa was inaugurated, and it became customary between 1636 and 1643 for the blockade fleet to put in at Malabar as well and pursue trade there. At the same time, the Dutch – like the English – sent out feelers in 1637 to the pepper marts of the Konkan area, and attempted as well to reach an understanding with Virji Vorah for the delivery of pepper to their factory at Surat.[301] It was only in the early 1640s however that the Malabar trade really began to pay them dividends. Initially, the Dutch had sent a commodity mix of Indonesian spices, lead, tin, etc. to the Malabar markets. However, as their experience of trade improved, and as they explored a diversity of pepper procurement areas including Cannanore, Calicut, Purakad, Kayamkulam and Kollam, it was found that the best imports into the region were opium, cotton and Gujarati textiles.[302] From the beginning of van der Lijn's governorship in 1644, it became the practice to send in November of every year a fleet of two to four ships, which would go from Batavia via Ponto de Gale (in Ceylon) to Malabar, and of which at least one would proceed directly from Batavia to Surat, returning from there with goods for the Malabar market. These ships usually returned to Batavia in June or July, but on occasion even as early as March.[303] As

[299] The prices stipulated were 27 rials of eight a *khandi* (of 520 Dutch ponds) of pepper, and 11 rials of eight the *khandi* of ginger. The text of this agreement is published in J.E. Heeres, ed., *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Deel I, pp. 205–8.

[300] For details, see H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *DR Batavia, Anno 1631–34*, The Hague, 1898, pp. 169–70, 192–3, 205–6, 367–8.

[301] Roelofsz., *Vestiging*, p. 74.

[302] 'Instructie voor de oppercoopman Dirck Schoorl…', 16 September 1647, *AR*, BUB, Anno 1647, VOC. 871, fls. 506–14, especially fls. 507–8.

[303] Roelofsz., *Vestiging*, pp. 113–14; *AR*, BUB, VOC. 870, fls. 329–34; VOC. 871, fls. 506–14; VOC. 872, fls. 325–9 *passim*.

the 1640s wore on, the multilateral character of the trade grew more pronounced. The VOC began to procure goods at Malabar for sale at Surat, and at least some of the pepper was used to feed not the European market but China and Taiwan.[304] The factory at Kayamkulam had by 1648 become a fixture, with a Dutch factor remaining there to see to the pepper procurement and the sale of imported goods even after the ships had departed for Batavia. Typical of the growing complexity of the Dutch trade on Malabar was their combination of Malwa opium, bought at Surat, with Patna opium, for which an order of 10,000 Dutch ponds was sent to the Coromandel factories in 1647.[305] By 1649, the amount of Bengal opium sold by them at Kayamkulam had increased to 20,000 ponds, while the orders for the same factory included 200,000 ponds areca, coir, 18,000 ponds cardamom, and various other goods, which were valued at f. 47,888 in all, and were destined for sale at Surat.[306]

In the period up to 1652, during the so-called Ten Years' Truce between Holland and Portugal in Asia, the VOC had managed to acquire a substantial foothold in the Malabar trade. This process of creeping penetration was soon reversed in the 1650s, with the resumption of hostilities and the expulsion of the Dutch factory at Kayamkulam. It was not until 1663 that the gains of the 1640s could be consolidated. For the 1640s, however, we have the figures shown in Table 4.13 for the annual shipments of pepper from Malabar to Batavia in the holds of VOC vessels:[307]

We thus observe a sharp increase in the procurement of Malabar pepper by the Dutch between the beginning and the middle of the decade 1640–50. Yet, even at its height, the pepper procured by the VOC in this decade never exceeded 740 tonnes, which is slightly less than the highest figures for the pepper cargoes carried on the Portuguese *Carreira da Índia* in the period 1612–30. It would seem a reasonable conclusion then that the combined procurement by the Dutch, English and Portuguese official agencies of Malabar and Kanara pepper in the half-century 1600–50 would very seldom have exceeded 1,000 to 1,200 tonnes, and most certainly could not have

304 Roelofsz., *Vestiging*, p. 135

305 *AR*, BUB, VOC. 871, Instruction to Arnoldt Heussen, dated 27 July 1647, fl. 379.

306 *AR*, BUB, VOC. 873, fl. 163.

307 This table has been calculated from diverse references in Roelofsz., *Vestiging*, pp. 97–147, on the assumption that one *last* of pepper equals 2462.5 Dutch *ponds*. The price of purchase, for 1651, was calculated at 25–6 rials of eight (each rial = f. 2.5) for the *khandi* of 500 Dutch *ponds; AR*, Overgekomen Brieven, VOC. 1187, fls. 711–15, Letter from Dirck Schoorl and Matheus van den Brouck at 'Calecoulang' (Kayamkulam) to Carel Reyniersen, 23 March 1651.

Table 4.13. *VOC imports of Malabar pepper into Batavia, 1642–52*

Year	Amount (ponds)	Year	Amount (ponds)
1642	217,045	1648	1,463,698
1643	236,854	1649	1,014,550
1644	320,133	1650	837,250
1645	623,012	1651	1,391,313
1646	1,009,25	1652	982,538
1647	945,600		

Note: 1 pond = 0.49 Kg.
Source: See note 307.

attained the highest levels carried on the Cape route in the sixteenth century, namely 1,500 tonnes. One can safely conclude therefore–even if one does not assume any expansion in pepper production in south-west India in the period 1600–50–that the proportion of this pepper traded by the three major European entities declined. It follows from this that a greater relative and absolute amount must have fallen to the alternative networks of distribution, involving private Portuguese and their 'navios pimenteiros', shipping based at Cannanore, Calicut, Basrur and Bhatkal as well as the overland trade to Coromandel, and the coastal flows to Tuticorin, Konkan and Gujarat.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to cover a fair deal of ground, ranging from the northern Coromandel port of Masulipatnam, to the Kanara coast, over a period of more than three-quarters of a century, from roughly 1570 to 1650. In doing so, the principal purpose has been to make use of a diversity of European documentation to present a rounded picture of external commerce, in which the European participants are placed in the proper perspective. If one significant conclusion has emerged from the debates of the last half-century and more, and the writings of J.C. van Leur, his supporters and critics, it is that neither form of ethnocentricism (whether that of Europe, or that of Asia) is appropriate as a strategy for studying this period.

This said, the principal argument underlying this chapter has been that the period beginning in around 1570 sees a considerable expansion and realignment in the external commerce carried on from the shores of southern India. In the case of the south-eastern

seaboard, this is evident from the blossoming of two networks of seaborne trade, which are related in a complex and shifting fashion: that involving ports such as Masulipatnam, Aceh, and Tavoy, and that involving the *casado* trade. The latter, initially articulated as subsidiary to the concession-system of voyages created by the Portuguese Crown in the last third of the sixteenth century, soon comes to acquire a life of its own. The Companies, most significantly the Dutch, and to a lesser extent their English and Danish counterparts, participate in Coromandel trade by using, and at times modifying the networks that had begun to crystallise some three decades before the VOC yacht *Delft* arrived at Masulipatnam. It is of some importance to note that the success of these Companies, and in particular of the Dutch, was only partly a consequence of the exploration of new markets, such as the European market for Indian textiles. The real foundation of the Dutch commerce on Coromandel in the period up to 1650 was its trade to south-east Asia, and this foundation was built not on price competition, but by seeking to exclude opposition by means of treaty or naked force. The contrast between Dutch success in this market and their abysmal failure in other large markets for Coromandel goods – in particular Burma, and the Middle East – is best understood in this context.

If Dutch (and to a lesser extent English and Danish) success was bought at a cost to Asian and Luso-Indian traders, this did not mean that there was always an *absolute* fall in the levels of trade of these others. This apparent paradox can be explained by the fact that the Dutch claimed a share in a commercial pie that was itself expanding over the period. Thus, it is best to see the costs incurred by other, non-Company, trades as a mix of real and opportunity costs, rather than simply real costs.

On the south-west coast, as on Coromandel, the period from about 1570 sees the crystallisation of significant networks of trade that had been in the process of evolution since mid century. The set of trading links centring around Cochin provides us an excellent example of this, and its fate parallels in interesting ways that of the networks on the other seaboard. In both cases, the period from roughly 1570 to 1630 is one of clear general expansion, and the successive articulation of a complex of links, some fairly distant (such as Masulipatnam's trade to the Persian Gulf and Makassar, or Cochin's trade in the easterly direction). However, for reasons which differed somewhat in the two cases, the decades from 1630 to 1650 see much more of realignment than general expansion: in both cases, the Companies make significant gains in this period, and, while the consequences in

the case of Cochin are serious, they are less so for Masulipatnam and Nagapattinam.

To sum up then, the last two chapters have sought to demonstrate in broad strokes the major developments – the significant phases of expansion, contraction and stagnation, the ports and traders involved – in the external commerce of southern India over the century and a half from 1500 to 1650. A preliminary attempt to draw up a balance sheet of losses and gains was also made, as also to delineate the principal reasons for the changing configurations that underpinned commercial activity. In the chapters that follow, the focus will shift somewhat to specific themes drawn on the spatial and temporal canvas that has been defined here. The issues to be discussed will include the nature of the interaction between Europeans and Asians in this period, and the relationship between trade and political participation in southern India. And finally, some general arguments will be presented on the structural relationship between trade and the southern Indian economy over the period taken as a whole.

5

Europeans and Asians in an age of contained conflict

Writing some two decades ago, the American historian Holden Furber brought into currency an important concept, which has since repeatedly been used to characterise the interaction between Europeans and Asians (and in particular Indians) in the period from roughly 1500 to 1750. This was the term 'the Age of Partnership', and Furber argued that, far from being a period in which Europeans carefully and inexorably moved to conquer and subjugate Asia and its inhabitants, the early modern epoch had been witness to important forms of cooperation between Europeans and Asians.[1] This view was counterposed, naturally, to writers of the school of K.M. Panikkar, whose view of a colonial age with roots from the very moment the *degredados* from Vasco da Gama's fleet set foot in Calicut has already been noted. However, as Ashin Das Gupta has recently pointed out, this conception of an age of partnership, in which violence was somehow incidental, was one viewed sceptically from the very outset by at least some, including Charles Boxer. More recently, Das Gupta himself has suggested a somewhat modified notion of 'partnership', one in which there was 'the acceptance of a structure of trade and politics within which everybody functioned' rather than 'unreserved human acceptance of each other'.[2]

There are broadly speaking two possible approaches to the question of the interface between Europeans and Asians in this age. There is firstly the approach which seeks to identify the *facts* of the matter, measuring in some terms the impact of the European presence on Asian traders in this or that region. Distinguished contributions have been made, within this framework, to the study of

[1] Holden Furber, 'Asia and the West as Partners before 'Empire' and After', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume XXVIII (4), 1969, pp. 711–21; this also forms the theme of his *festschrift* edited by Blair B. Kling and M.N. Pearson, *The Age of Partnership: Europeans in Asia before Dominion*, Honolulu, 1979.

[2] Cf. Ashin Das Gupta, 'India and the Indian Ocean in the eighteenth century', in Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, Calcutta, 1987, pp. 131–2. However, also see the discussion in K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia*, pp. 111–14, where the author argues that force was an 'implicit part' of all European trade with Asia, because 'profits from armed trading were higher than in the case of peaceful commerce'.

the period: these include the writings of Om Prakash, Das Gupta and Arasaratnam, which have been concerned to establish that 'internal factors and the dynamics of Asian trade – and not the activities of European trade' were responsible for the decline of trading ports and areas such as Surat, Hughli or Coromandel in the period prior to 1750.[3] While this approach is a valid one, it is less than complete. By addressing, as it were, the factual kernel of the documentation, they lose sight of the documents themselves, which communicate a good deal about the ambience of the period, as distinct from the history of events.[4] This then would form the core of the second approach, which, one hastens to add, complements rather than replaces the first one. It is precisely such a two-pronged attack on the question of European-Asian relations which is attempted in the present chapter.

Before entering into specific case studies, however, it is worth noting that a distinction has arisen over time between the treatment of the European presence in sixteenth century Asia, in contrast to that in the seventeenth century. In particular on account of the influential writings of Niels Steensgaard, it has become common to portray the sixteenth century European (that is, Portuguese) presence as violent and 'redistributive', aimed at a parasitical siphoning-off of the juices of Asian trade, with the European Company presence in the seventeenth century on the other hand being a 'productive enterprise', whose 'success was not based upon government monopolies or the use of violence, but on their ability to compete in the market'.[5] Critics of Steensgaard have noted some flaws in his argument, notably the neglect of the *evolution* of the Portuguese presence in sixteenth century Asia inherent in his structural formulation, his single-minded emphasis on Euro-Asian trade, as opposed to the European trade within Asia, and so on.[6]

3 See, for instance, Om Prakash, 'Asian trade and European impact: a study of the trade from Bengal, 1630–1720', in Kling and Pearson, eds., *The Age of Partnership*, pp. 43–70; Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat 1700–1750*; S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast*, pp. 354–5.

4 It should be clarified that Das Gupta's work on Surat is an exception to this statement, playing close attention to the language of the documentation.

5 See Niels Steensgaard, 'The Dutch East India Company as an institutional innovation', in Maurice Aymard, ed., *Dutch Capitalism and World Capitalism*, Cambridge/Paris, 1982, pp. 235–57; for his original statement of this theory, see Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, pp. 151–3, *passim*.

6 In particular, see M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, 'The structures of trade in Asia in the 16th and 17th centuries'; van Santen, 'De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan', pp. 51–63, *passim*.

However, in his treatment of the European Companies, Steensgaard's writings are of a piece with earlier writings; Tapan Raychaudhuri, in his study of the Dutch on Coromandel, for instance, repeatedly portrayed the violent actions of the VOC as no more than reactions to the 'familiar policy of extortion' of local officials, and speaks too of a constant struggle 'against the illegitimate demands and restrictive measures of local authorities'. Moreover, such acts by the Dutch and English only show, he argues, that 'under exceptional circumstances, they could ... hope to secure redress for their grievances by violent means'.[7]

It is clear of course that this is a case of an historian accepting the world-view of his sources, in the absence of a clear, alternative discourse in contemporary documentation. It is only in rare instances that we can counterpose to the sources of European expansion an alternative portrayal; the south Arabian Hadrami chronicles provide us one such example, as do the *Sĕjarah Mĕlayu* and the *Hikayat* literature from south-east Asia. In the case of southern India, Zainuddin Maabari's *Tuḥfat al-mujāhidīn fi b'ad aḥwāl al-Burtukāliyyīn*, has been used to provide an alternative point of perspective to that of the Portuguese chroniclers on the struggle between the *Estado da Índia* and the Mappilas of Malabar, but this remains an exception.[8] What remains to the historian then is to closely read between the lines of his sources, verify their internal consistency, and – where possible – counterpose one European source to another. These procedures, while far from perfect, reveal to us a picture of a world permeated, in its language and images, as indeed in its actions, by violence. What distinguished this period was the extent to which this conflict and potential for violence remained bounded; thus, we shall argue, rather than an 'age of partnership', it was in reality an 'age of contained conflict'.

The Portuguese profile

In his recent study of the Jesuit, Matteo Ricci [1552–1610], who spent almost three decades in China, Jonathan Spence has noted the influence on European observers in Asia of the atmosphere in Europe within which they were brought up. Arriving in Asia between

[7] Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605–1690*, pp. 8, 13, *passim*.

[8] For translations of Zainuddin's *Tuhfat al-mujāhidīn*, see David Lopes, *História dos Portugueses no Malabar por Zinadim*, Lisbon (Imprensa Nacional), 1898; also the English editions of J. Rowlandson (London, 1833) and S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar (Madras, 1942). For an excellent general discussion, Stephen F. Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 3–62.

their early teens and their twenties, most Europeans of the period – whether Portuguese, Spanish, Italians, English or Dutch – had a view of violence and mortality in keeping with the Europe of their age. If Ricci, bred in the town on Macerata, had witnessed family feuds, a French invasion, and lived through an Ottoman threat to the nearby port of Ancona, others had cut their teeth in the bloody Dutch wars against the Spanish, or, if Portuguese, might have had a taste of mortality in campaigns in north Africa.[9] If Portuguese soldiers, in the words of Diogo do Couto, 'frequently placed themselves face to face against wild elephants [in sieges in Ceylon] and made them retreat, as if they were fleeing from animals wilder and more ferocious than themselves', this was no coincidence, for in the vocabulary of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Portuguese chronicler *crueldade* was a manly virtue.[10] A Florentine merchant, describing in December 1510 his own role in the taking of Goa, wrote:

> And afterwards, together, with the aid of God, we went to capture a land in these parts, which is very strong, and populous, and large, where there was a castle and fortress; where in guard of it there were eight to ten thousand persons, with more than two hundred pieces of artillery, where, by the Grace of God, we entered by force of arms, and to enter it we killed around two thousand persons of those who resisted us. And these were almost all Turks, and renegade Christians of every sort; among whom were Venetians and Genoese in the largest numbers. Then, we entered the land, and no one was spared, neither male nor female, pregnant women and droves of children. And this because this land had always been a shelter for thieves and evildoers, both on sea and on land, and had always been an enemy of the Christian name, and above all of the Portuguese; and the land was wholly put to sack and fire and flame, which is called Ghoa.[11]

Piero Strozzi, the writer of these words, was no exception to the mentality of his age – differentiated from others perhaps only by the admiration he openly expressed for the shrewdness of Asians. He suffered from the gravest insecurity, like many others (thus, 'I assure

[9] Cf. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, pp. 27–38, 132–4, *passim*; also Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 32–4, *passim*.

[10] Diogo do Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década VII, reprint Lisbon, 1975, Livro X, Chap. 14, pp. 553–4; also Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, 'Exiles and renegades in early 16th century Portuguese India', *IESHR*, 1986, pp. 249–62.

[11] 'Lettera di Piero Strozzi, scritta dal castello di Goa il 20 decembre 1510 a Andrea suo padre in Firenze', published in Gustavo Uzielli, 'Piero di Andrea Strozzi: Viaggiatore fiorentino del secolo delle scoperte', *Memorie della Società Geografica Italiana*, Volume V, 1895, pp. 141–2. Also see Angelo de Gubernatis, *Storia dei Viaggiatori Italiani nelle Indie Orientali*, Leghorn, 1875, pp. 18–19; the version of this letter in Gubernatis, *Storia*, pp. 381–3, is incorrect.

you that we are always in the jaws of death, both on the sea and on land') on account of a sense of being swamped by a horde of aliens, concerning whom he wrote, 'may it please God to extend his hand [to our forces] as He will certainly do, because otherwise it will be impossible to resist such a multitude ... who are like ants in number'. The conclusion he drew was that no quarter could be given in war, lest it appear a sign of weakness; in his own phrase, 'it seems to me [Indians] are superior to us in countless things, save with sword in hand, which they cannot resist'. Almost a century later, António Bocarro, describing a Portuguese raid on the Bay of Motupalli in Golconda, wrote of how the raiders 'carried out great destruction and cruelties, taking them [local inhabitants] by surprise, and thus they killed and captured many women and children, and took many textiles, with no one to defend them'.[12] Once again, the style of warfare perfected in north Africa was carried into Asia; and here, we note the characteristic use of the word 'cruelties'.

The tone had been set, we know, from the second Portuguese voyage to India, that of Pedro Álvares Cabral. When some of his crew were attacked in Calicut (in an ambience of growing mutual distrust), Cabral proceeded, writes an anonymous Italian witness, to 'take ten Moorish ships that were in the port, and ordered that all the people who were in the said ships be killed: and so there were killed some five hundred or six hundred men'. The next day, Cabral proceeded with his fleet to bombard the city, 'so that we killed infinite people and did much damage'. Not content with this, Cabral repeated his actions in Pandarane, and then went on to Cochin.[13]

It is significant to note, however, that from the very earliest times, Portuguese observers in Asia did not believe themselves to be more violent than the inhabitants of the lands they visited. Describing the annual *puram* festival in Calicut, Duarte Barbosa stresses the fact that the Nairs in the procession 'walk ... with bare swords, slashing themselves wheresoever they can, and foaming at the mouth', repeatedly suggesting a parallel with flagellation in Portuguese religious processions in Cochin later in the same century. When looking to the system of justice, the details are once again stressed in

[12] Cf. António Bocarro, *Década 13 da História da Índia*, Volume II, pp. 620–2. Compare this with a description of the siege of Goa (1510), in *Comentários do grande Afonso de Albuquerque*, ed. J. Veríssimo Serrão, 2 Volumes, Lisbon, 1973, Volume II, pp. 11–12.

[13] 'Navigazion del capitano Pedro Alvares scritta per un piloto portoghese...', in G. B. Ramusio, *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, ed. Marica Milanesi, Volume I, pp. 647–9, *passim*.

all their gruesome flavour; A 'heathen' thief is 'carried to a spot where justice is executed, where there are many sharp stakes, and a small platform through which they pass the point of a stake. There they behead him with a sword, and then impale him on the stake between the shoulder blades, making it pass out through his belly, and project a cubit and more beyond it, and his head is put on another stake'. As for Muslims who committed such crimes in Calicut, they would be taken 'to a wide open space, and there they slay him with sword cuts'.[14] Other writers of the same century, describing China and Japan, lay stress on precisely such features of those cultures: in the case of China, Matteo Ricci repeatedly noted the prevalence of public beating, 'with a pole of the hardest possible wood, the thickness of a finger, four fingers wide, long as one's two arms outstretched. The dispensers of the punishment hold the pole with both hands and use great force ... so that with the first blow they often take away the skin, and with other blows the flesh, piece by piece'. His contemporary and mentor, Alessandro Valignano claimed for his part that 'whereas the Japanese found satisfaction in killing with their swords, the Chinese preferred to beat people and watch blood flow'.[15]

It need not concern us here how frequent, statistically, such incidents were, either in China, or indeed in southern India. It is more important for us to remember that it was from precisely these images that the Europeans in Asia built their stereotypes; a central image of early seventeenth century Portuguese views of Japan, for example, was the crucifixion of twenty-six Christians in Nagasaki in 1597, the more so since their bodies were left in public view for months thereafter.[16] In precisely the same manner, the Europeans in sixteenth century southern India saw themselves as actors in a violent world, a world moreover in which some were differentiated from others – racially, culturally and otherwise – by being ruthless in war, in contrast to the 'gente fraca e não exercitada de guerra', whom they often faced.[17]

[14] *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, ed. M.L. Dames, Volume II, pp. 21, 27–30.

[15] Cited in Spence, *Matteo Ricci*, pp. 48–9. Also see the descriptions by Galeote Pereira, Gaspar da Cruz and Martín de Rada, in C.R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, London, 1953, pp. 18–20, 175–85, 299–302. Gaspar da Cruz (pp. 175–85), is particularly graphic in his description.

[16] Spence, *Matteo Ricci*, p. 53, and references therein.

[17] For one example of the use of this phrase, employed often with minor variations in the period, see the letter from Philip of Spain to his viceroy at Goa, dated 21 February 1610, published in R.A. de Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documentos Remettidos da Índia*, Volume I, p. 359.

One of the important contexts in which such a set of images was confirmed time and again was in the long and sanguine wars against the Muslim Mappilas of Malabar. We have already seen that Malabar trade, both coastal and overseas, was dominated in the main by Muslim mercantile communities, though Jews, Chetties from Coromandel, and *vanias* from Gujarat all traded in and from Calicut and other ports. The Muslim communities had been distinguished by the Portuguese early on into two groups, *mouros da terra* and *mouros da Arábia*. The distinction was in fact meant to distinguish the Mappila Muslims from all Middle Eastern Muslims, although the latter (the so-called *Pardesi* Muslims) in fact came from a wide variety of regions besides the Arabian peninsula. In the westward trade from Malabar, specifically that directed towards Arabia and Persia, the *Pardesi* merchants dominated, and hence the Portuguese initially perceived a conflict of interest in particular with this group rather than the Mappilas, who for their part dominated the trade 'from India to India'.[18]

As a consequence of this, the Portuguese rapidly entered into conflictual relations with the Samudri Raja and the *Pardesi* merchants of Calicut, and encouraged Cochin to develop itself as a rival to Calicut. In the early phase, the Portuguese even used as agents in the procurement of commodities for the cargoes of Europe-bound carracks Mappila merchants such as Cherian and Mamali Marakkar.[19] However, this amicable nexus did not last long, and, by 1530, the Portuguese had entered into headlong conflict with several of the principal families of Mappila traders on the coast, partly on account of premeditated policies, and partly due to the violent acts of individual Portuguese attached to the *Estado*. These continued into the 1530s; Miguel Ferreira, who from his base on Coromandel, fought a series of campaigns in Sri Lanka against Mappila *mujāhidīn*, has left us in his letters bloody details of a conflict in which no quarter was given by either side.[20] Stephen F. Dale, in an analysis of this conflict, compares the *jihād* of the Mappilas to the struggle in island south-east Asia between the Portuguese and Aceh; perhaps the crucial contrast is between the form of the latter struggle (periodic sieges of Melaka led by the Sultan of Aceh and a type of warfare

[18] For a detailed discussion, see Geneviève Bouchon, 'Les Musulmans du Kerala à l'époque de la découverte Portugaise'.

[19] *Ibid.*; also Bouchon, 'Sixteenth century Malabar and the Indian Ocean', in Das Gupta and Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean*, pp. 162–84.

[20] Letter from Miguel Ferreira to D. João III of Portugal, in *ANTT*, CC, I/66/41, dated 26 November 1539.

aimed at defining regions of influence) and the former, wherein the militancy was not quite so contingent on state support. We may note that over time the Samudri Raja himself came to have little control or influence on the Mappilas, unless he resorted to the use of force against them. Further, as we shall see in the next chapter, the growing militancy of certain sections of the Mappila community eventually represented as much a threat to the Hindu sovereigns of the coast as to the Portuguese *Estado*. In the 1590s, the 'betrayal' of the Kunjali to the Portuguese in 1599 by the Calicut Raja was a political act, demonstrating that, while the Mappilas were supported up to a point by the overarching states of the region, beyond a certain point the same state regarded them as a threat.[21]

Despite their precarious political position, it is evident that it was the Mappila ferocity in battle, as much as their grasp of the tactics involved in marine guerrilla warfare, which made them so feared by Portuguese shipowners and traders operating along the Malabar and Kanara coasts. A modern historian of warfare has noted how in their 'light vessels of shallow draft powered by oars and sails, they ... operated in 'packs' and, rather like the Mediterranean galleys, used their centreline gun against becalmed merchantmen'.[22] What struck contemporaries like François Pyrard though, was not this military finesse; rather, he wrote of the Mappila struggle against the Portuguese:

> The War between them is very cruel and merciless, for the Malabars are so courageous that they never surrender, and prefer death. I have seen them, when in battle with the Portuguese, on perceiving that they were the weaker side and could not avoid being taken, all come to one side of their galliot, and go down with their booty, galliot and all, and sometimes even wait till some Portuguese had boarded their vessel, so that they should perish with them.[23]

In the course of the sixteenth century, fighting captains like André Furtado de Mendonça, or earlier Miguel Ferreira, who cut their teeth in such battles, ensured that Portuguese tactics were (to the extent discipline permitted) no less forceful.

[21] For general discussions, see Bouchon, 'Sixteenth century Malabar', pp. 180–1 and Dale, *Islamic Society*, pp. 67–8; but also see C.R. Boxer, 'A note on the Portuguese translation by Francisco Ros S.J. of an Ola from the Samorin of Calicut to André Furtado de Mendonça (1599)', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, IV, 1980, pp. 89–93, and *ANTT*, Manuscritos do Convento da Graça, Tomo III (Caixa 2), fls. 267, 291–2, 297–9, 319 and 335.

[22] Cf. Parker, *The Military Revolution*, pp. 105–6.

[23] *The Voyage of Francois Pyrard of Laval*, ed. Albert Gray, et al., 2 Volumes, London, 1887–8, Volume I, p. 444, cited in Dale, *Islamic Society*, p. 53.

The Mercantile resistance to empire: The Chatins de Barcelor, 1570–90

If the Mappila conflict with the Portuguese is the best known struggle of the sixteenth century, this does not imply that the Portuguese imperial enterprise elsewhere on the south-west coast of India was always smooth sailing. In our analysis of trade from Bhatkal, this was one of the aspects dealt with at some length, and in addition we have other instances. In this section, we concern ourselves with another group that resisted the *Estado da Índia* with, as it emerges, a certain measure of success. These were the traders settled at Basrur, south of Bhatkal, a community encountered in the Portuguese records as the 'Chatins de Barcelor'.

The port town of Basrur, located on the Kanara coast in 13° 37′ North, was for the greater part of the sixteenth century as well as the first half of the seventeenth century the rice port *par excellence* on that coast. Bhatkal to the north and Mangalore to the south exported rice as well, as did a whole host of other minor Kanara ports, but the rice flows through this port seem to have been of greatest significance.[24] The town was located to the interior of the Kundapur estuary, which was formed by three rivers – Kolluru, Maladi and Chakranadi – all of which entered the sea at more or less the same locus. The north of the estuary was overhung by the peninsula of Gangolli, and to the south, a few kilometres up the Maladi, lay Basrur. In the sixteenth century, the area, like Bhatkal to the north, was under a complex form of political control, with the Vijayanagara Rayas excercising sovereignty over the region through their western viceroyalty. However, the tributary chieftains of the region – such as those of Gangolli and Barkur (the latter termed the Nayaka of Tuluva by the Portuguese) – were in control of such fiscal administration as in fact existed. With an extensive and stable rainfall from the south-west monsoon, the area was by and large triple-cropped or double-cropped, with rice being the major product, besides sugarcane, ginger, pepper and coconuts. The major rice harvest was in October, and thereafter – from October to January – the rice trade along the coast was carried on in all earnest.

In the area around the estuary, the trade in rice was handled essentially by the mercantile community resident at Basrur. In contrast to the merchants of Honawar or Bhatkal, who were in large measure either *navayat* or *pardesi* Muslims, the community of Basrur

[24] See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'The Portuguese, the port of Basrur and the rice trade, 1600–1650', *IESHR*, 1984, pp. 433–62.

was, according to all available sources from the period, exclusively Hindu and Jain. They appear in particular to have been dominated by Saraswats, and the suffix 'Chatim' attached to their names by the Portuguese merely indicates that they were Hindus, and merchants. A particularly curious aspect of the community was its form of administration. All the Portuguese chronicles are unanimous in agreeing that the town was autonomously administered; in one version it is said that 'they governed themselves like a Republic, and paid some tributes to the Raju [viz. the Vijayanagara ruler]'[25], while a later account declares that the town and port were '*terra franca*, governed like a republic, without having any other subjection nor recognising any form of overlordship save for a small tribute that is paid to the Kings of Narsinga'.[26] The chronicler Diogo do Couto, who was apparently much perplexed by this form of government, struck upon an ingenious solution. He identified the port with the 'Selero' mentioned by Pliny, and suggested that the contact in ancient times with the city-states of Europe had influenced them. To quote him, 'In richness, mode of government, police and everything else, it is very different from all the others [towns] of that coast, because it is the only one that is governed like a republic, with a certain number of senators elected by the people, who usually are the oldest among them'.[27] Without hastening to the conclusion that here we have the first Indian city-state of the sixteenth century, we shall content ourselves with noting that there was apparently a great deal of autonomy exercised in the functioning of the mercantile community, and that the political supremacy of the overarching sovereign structure – be it of a local ruler or of Vijayanagara – was somewhat superficial.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese *Estado* had occasionally procured rice and other goods in the port of Basrur, without however ever entering into extensive relations with its merchants. In the 1540s, though, after Martim Afonso de Sousa's raid on Bhatkal, the 'Chatins' agreed to pay 700 bales of rice on an occasional basis to the *Estado* as a protection cost.[28] However, in 1549, when the Captain-Major of the coastal fleet attempted to collect this amount, the merchants refused, stating that what they had given before was 'by way of service and not by way of obligation'. With an

[25] Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década VIII, p. 279.

[26] F.P. Mendes da Luz, ed., 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', p. 63; on Basrur, also see K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, Dharwar, 1970, pp. 261, 266–7.

[27] Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década X, Parte I, pp. 379–80.

[28] *Ibid.*, Década V, Parte II, pp. 303–8.

ugly confrontation in the making, the merchant community resolved to 'send two agents, principal men among them, called Trametim Chatim and Drimy Chatim, to treat of that matter with the Governor'. These two arrived in Goa, where they negotiated with the *Estado* 'in the name of their Republic', and a compromise was reached wherein they agreed to hand over 500 bales of rice annually (in place of the earlier 700) in October, after the harvest, and in return the Governor Jorge Cabral gave them a 'letter of vassalage', assuring them that future Governors of the *Estado* would do them no harm, and give them as many *cartazes* as they needed for their ships.[29] The representatives then departed, and it is reported that, during the next two decades, they kept their part of the bargain.

The *Estado da Índia* on the other hand was unable to do the same. Forced by the 1560s to take control of the Kanara coast, partly to control the pepper flow, and partly to ensure Goa's lifeline – the rice supply from Kanara – they attacked Basrur early in 1569 and set up the third of their fortresses on the Kanara coast. This fortress, named *Santa Luzia*, was in fact built on the site of an earlier fort which the Portuguese forces had overrun, and which had been maintained and supplied with artillery by the 'Chatins'.[30] The Portuguese on setting up this fort, which commanded the mouth of the estuary, decided to make the most of it. A customs house was set up there to collect duties on the export of rice and on the import of horses from Ormuz, which was now permitted through there instead of through Goa alone. In the early 1570s, the customs house yielded 5,000 *pardaus* a year by way of import duties, another 1,000 on exports, and these two together with the tribute of 500 bales of rice negotiated two decades earlier added up to roughly two-thirds the cost of maintaining a garrison there.[31] The first signs of resistance to this continuous process of encroachment came in 1573, when the 'Chatins', who according to even the Portuguese, 'were now like captives, having been so free earlier', decided to attack and take over the fort. Raising a force of 5,000 to 6,000 men, they besieged the fort early in 1573. The siege continued for almost a year, with brief interruptions.[32] Goa sent a squadron of three galliots to relieve it and to put pressure on the enemy, but the 'Chatins', ever more determined, continued to

[29] *Ibid.*, Década VI, Parte II, pp. 157–9.
[30] Ibid., Década VIII, pp. 279–82.
[31] Jean Aubin, 'Le "Orçamento do Estado da Índia" de António de Abreu (1574)', *Studia*, No. 4, July 1959, pp. 246–8.
[32] Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década IX, Cap. XIII, pp. 89–90.

spend large sums of money on the siege force. The second year, a squadron of ten galliots and foists reached the port; this squadron replenished the fort's supplies of munitions, shored up the garrison and captured a ship belonging to one of Basrur's merchants which was on its return from the Red Sea. We hear no more of the siege after this, though António de Abreu, who compiled the budget of the *Estado* in 1574, noted that, while his calculations reflected what he felt would be the normal yield of the Basrur customs house, 'at present it yields nothing'.[33] Reality soon caused legislation to be modified, and by 1580 even the pretence of a customs house was abandoned.[34] The purpose of the fortress was now restricted to collecting the tribute of rice, and ensuring the flow of rice to Goa from the richly productive lands around the estuary.

The hostility of Basrur's merchant residents was not at its end however. Couto, our most regular source for the period, notes that the fortress was a 'collar on their necks', adding that foreign merchants had ceased to frequent the place, largely on account of 'the great greed of our captains, who call everything that enters the river to the fortress, and then buy it, paying what they please'.[35] For the 'Chatins' then, the lifting of the customs house was a taste of success, and they intended to see if the fort itself could be removed.

In 1583, the captain of Basrur fort was Francisco de Melo de Sampayo, who (in Couto's words) 'like every one of the others worked to enrich himself'.[36] In the month of March that year, the 'Chatins' succeeded in persuading one of a small community of local Christian converts employed in the fort to open the gates at night during a religious procession, so as to take the garrison unawares. The coincidental arrival of a Portuguese *armada* on its way to Cochin foiled their plans, but they attempted it again on the eve of Easter. By this time, however, the captain had grown suspicious; hence, he caught and tortured some of those involved, extracting from them a complete confession. The merchants now resorted to the use of force rather than guile, and together with some local Nayakas of Tuluva attacked a small *casado* settlement just outside the fortress walls and burnt it down. There were immediate and harsh reprisals, the *Estado* dispatching a fleet under André Furtado de Mendonça to

33 Aubin, 'Le "Orçamento do Estado da Índia"' p. 248.

34 Thus both in 1581 and 1582, there is no mention of revenue being collected at Basrur. See A. Teodoro de Matos, *O Estado da Índia nos Anos 1581–88*, p. 72; Mendes da Luz ed., 'Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas', pp. 63–4.

35 Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década X, Parte I, pp. 379–82.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 382.

take charge of the punitive action.[37] On his arrival, the 'Chatins' lifted a siege they had begun of the fort, and retreated into their town to take up a defensive position. It is important to note here that André Furtado was an experienced Mappila-fighter, and that his notions of the conduct of war were accordingly fashioned; Furtado's first action was to sail upriver, burning the villages in the vicinity and finally attacking the Kundanesvara temple, which he burnt to the ground with a large number of people inside. This act was particularly harsh since the temple was a focal point of the local economy and society. In fact Couto states that 'many revenues and the duties on all entries and exits in the port' were deposited here for public necessities, in the period anterior to the creation of the fort *Santa Luzia*. The merchants were now forced to devote their attention to the rebuilding and purification of the temple, in which process, it is reported, 'they spent much money as well as time'. André Furtado was not content with this however and spent the following months with a fleet of nine vessels 'destroying, burning and cutting down all the settlements of the Chatins'.[38] He attacked in addition one of the islands in the estuary, where the merchants had a warehouse, besides returning again to burn down the outskirts of the town proper. By now the 'Chatins', who had reaped the whirlwind, were ready to sue for peace, but André Furtado would have none of it, stating that 'he had no orders from the viceroy'. The incident petered out in September of the same year, when the fleet set off for the Malabar coast to accompany a larger patrolling squadron.

By the 1590s the merchants of the town had another problem on their hands. This was on account of the rapid expansion of the kingdom of Ikkeri under Venkatappa Nayaka [1586–1629].[39] The 'Chatins' were not the only ones alarmed, and the letters from the rulers of the coastal principalities from Gersoppa to Bangher are full of this new menace.[40] The conquest of the entire region by the Ikkeri Nayaka was more or less complete by 1600, even if it took another two decades to snuff out all resistance. One of the first acts that

[37] *Ibid.*, 389. See also C.R. Boxer and J.A. Frazão de Vasconcelos, *André Furtado de Mendonça, 1558–1610,* Lisbon. 1955.

[38] Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década X, Parte I, pp. 417–18.

[39] On Ikkeri's expansion under Venkatappa, see K.D. Swaminathan, *The Nayakas of Ikkeri*, Chapter VI; also H. Heras, 'The Expansion Wars of Venkatapa Nayak of Ikkeri', *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission* (1929), pp. 106–24.

[40] *ANTT*, Manuscritos do Convento da Graça, Tomo III (Caixa 2), fls. 141–5, 153–8, 160, 209, 293, 317 (all dating from 1597–8); also see *HAG*, Monções do Reino 2B [1595–1601], fls. 421–3.

Venkatappa committed in the early years of the seventeenth century was to offer the *Estado da Índia* a customs house at Basrur! In 1608, then, the customs house that the 'Chatins' had struggled so hard to remove was re-established, with a 6 per cent duty on imports from Gujarat, the Persian Gulf, Cochin and south-east Asia, and a equivalent toll on exportation. Some historians might choose therefore to treat the case of Basrur in the second half of the sixteenth century then as one parallel to what M.N. Pearson has posited for Gujarat.[41] The resistance to the *Estado da Índia* and its demands was vigorous so long as it was in the hands of merchants based on the littoral, such as Basrur's 'Chatins'. The overarching state, here Ikkeri, eventually betrays the commercial interest, giving the Portuguese far stronger concessions than they could have got from dealing with the 'Chatins' themselves. While such a comparison is undoubtedly tempting, it does not ring wholly true, particularly where the Nayakas of Ikkeri are concerned. As we have seen from their actions in the half-century 1600–50, both in the context of the pepper contracts with the *Estado*, and in their attitude towards the ports in their territory, these princes acted as the shrewdest of merchants when the occasion required it. The point however is that their view was rather more global than that of a small sectarian group such as the 'Chatins de Barcelor', who were interested in the prosperity of their own town and its environs alone. To the Nayakas, whose own preference was for the port of Bhatkal, the interests of Basrur's merchants could be sacrificed in order to further more general ends: reducing Portuguese support of their rivals such as the *raja* of Bangher, assuring *cartazes* for their own ships, and so on. The differences between the attitude of the Nayakas and that of the 'Chatins' is ultimately related perhaps to the fact that one was a set of merchants in a restricted locality context and the other possessed of a broader political and economic vision, and not because the Nayakas of Ikkeri were simply 'Rulers', and the 'Chatins' on the other hand simply 'Merchants'.

Asians and Europeans in sixteenth century Coromandel

In the sixteenth century, we have already observed that the Portuguese and other Europeans settled on the Coromandel coast found themselves in a somewhat different position with respect to

[41] M.N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*; see also the discussion in Chapter 6, below.

neighbouring Asian political structures than did their counterparts in Malabar. Portuguese settlements on Coromandel, whether at Pulicat, Nagapattinam or São Tomé de Meliapor were unfortified, and we might have imagined that this would have brought to the Portuguese conduct in the area a certain prudence; if so, we would not have been wholly correct. From as early as 1519, individual Portuguese had shown a remarkable degree of belligerence in Coromandel ports; typical of this is João Moreno, who threatened the *adhikaris* in charge of customs collection at Kunjimedu and Naguru that he would impede navigation to Burma unless suitably recompensed.[42] Later instances, when Portuguese ships fought engagements with Mappila vessels off Nagapattinam, or even fought one another in the same vicinity, could not have reassured local potentates of Lusitanian intentions. The abortive attempt in the early 1540s by Martim Afonso de Sousa, Governor of the *Estado da Índia*, to raid Hindu temples on Coromandel (notably Kanchipuram, but also Tirupati) was a further point of friction, and it is in the 1550s that these come out into the open.[43] In 1558, Aliya Rama Raya, brother-in-law of the reigning Sadasiva Raya of Vijayanagara but himself *de facto* ruler, appears to have camped outside the walls of São Tomé de Meliapor with a large force, and demanded that the Portuguese settlers therein pay him a substantial indemnity. While at least one view links Rama Raya's actions to a rather forceful proselytisation campaign carried on by the Society of Jesus in the area in the 1550s, one cannot be certain of the reason. Some of those in São Tomé, including a certain Pero de Taíde (suitably nicknamed 'Inferno'), who was temporarily in the city while captaining the *nau del-Rei* to Melaka, counselled resistance, but the majority disagreed. However, since the amount demanded was too large, a compromise could not be struck, and Rama Raya departed with some hostages, who were eventually returned (probably after a smaller sum was paid him).[44]

When news of this incident reached Goa, it appears to have caused the revival of a move (mooted once earlier in the late 1530s) to remove the sacred relics of St. Thomas from Mylapur to the west coast, and even to transfer the Portuguese residents of the town,

[42] Gaspar Correia, *Lendas da Índia*. ed. M. Lopes de Almeida, Volume II, pp. 567–8; also see the report of Nuno de Castro in Cochin, dated 31 October 1520, *ANTT*, CC, I/9/92, in *CAA*, Volume VII, p. 182.

[43] Correia, *Lendas*, Volume IV, pp. 300–4, *passim*.

[44] On Aliya Rama Raya's, see Diogo do Couto, *Da Ásia*, Década VII, Part I, pp. 53–61; also see G.D. Winius, 'The "Shadow-Empire" of Goa in the Bay of Bengali'.

either to Goa, or preferably to Jaffna. But nothing came of this proposal.[45] However, the last third of the sixteenth century was a tension ridden period for the Portuguese settlers on Coromandel. Both at São Tomé, and in Nagapattinam, where they found themselves under the jurisdiction of the Nayaka ruler of Tanjavur, there were repeated fracasses. The source of these is not always perfectly clear: in fact, it is evident that there was no unique source. There was first the religious dimension, for the activities of the Jesuits and Franciscans, soon to be joined by the Augustinians included the rather cavalier use of Hindu temples. Secondly, factional differences within the Portuguese community sometimes led to one party appealing to local powers (whether at the level of the *adhikari* or at the higher level of the Nayaka) to intervene and decimate the other party. And finally, there were economic differences, over customs payments, other dues and occasional large levies when the Nayaka found himself in a liquidity crisis.

A clear vision of this is available from the accounts of the two Venetians who visited Coromandel in the last third of the sixteenth century, Cesare Federici and Gasparo Balbi. Federici, describing Nagapattinam in the late 1560s, writes:

> The city is of a great gentile lord of the kingdom of Bezeneger, nevertheless the Portuguese and the other Christians there are well off, with churches and a monastery of St. Francis of great devotion, and well housed; but, in the last analysis, they are in land of tyrants, who at their will can do them any ill, as occurred in the year 1565, if I recall it well, that the Naic, who is lord of the city, asked them for some Arab horses, and they having denied him them, a few days later, this lord came to see the sea (*vedere il mare*), so that the poor citizens, this being an unusual thing, had doubts that he came in dudgeon to sack their city and embarked with all the best things they had, the movables, merchandise, money and jewels, and made to distance the ships from land; but their luck was bad, so that the following night there was a great storm at sea, which flung all the ships against the shore; and all that could be recovered was robbed by the army which had come with the Lord, and which was present on the seashore.[46]

One may note that, following the customary law of the land, the Nayaka was in the right, for all goods from a shipwreck on his shores

[45] These proposals to move the settlers from São Tomé are discussed briefly in Winius, 'The "Shadow Empire"'. For details, see Fernão de Queyroz, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, pp. 386–9, *passim*, and José Wicki, ed., 'Duas Relações sobre a situação na Índia Portuguesa nos anos de 1568 e 1569', p. 163.

[46] *Viaggi di C. Federici e G. Balbi alle Indie Orientali*, ed. Olga Pinto, pp. 29–30.

were in fact his; this was to be a bone of contention in this and other contexts in the seventeenth century as well.

It is possible that, following this incident, the Portuguese sought to fortify their part of Nagapattinam; thus Balbi talks of a 'fortezza ... per difenderla dalle scorrerie del rè di Negapatan, il quale habita in terra ferma', but this is unsupported by other evidence, and makes little sense given Balbi's own testimony that by 1580 Achyutappa Nayaka of Tanjavur was 'in buona amicitia co' Portoghesi'.[47] However, it is clear that tensions continued, as appears from two sources: first, the literary representations of the *Parasikas* (Portuguese) in Tanjavur court literature, and secondly certain oral traditions of the region recorded by the Jesuit Manuel Barradas in the early seventeenth century. In texts such as the *Sāhityaratnākara* of Yajnanarayana Dikshita, the *Sāhitya Sudha* of Govinda Dikshita, and the *Raghunāthabhyudayam* of Ramabhadramba, the Portuguese are repeatedly referred to in negative terms, both in relation to their role in Jaffna, and closer at hand. A reference of particular interest is that to relations between the Portuguese and Solaga of Devikottai (at the mouth of the Kolladam river), a potentate with a reputedly immense appetite for sanguine deeds (which included throwing victims in sacks to crocodiles, and torture by inserting needles into the scalp)! If the Portuguese were said to have had 'allies' such as these, their own reputation could have been none-too-savoury in Tanjavur.[48]

Equally, Barradas who visited Nagapattinam in about 1615, has several apocryphal but significant local tales to relate. One concerns the Amman temple at Nagapattinam, that had a large column of black stone in it, which legend had it had emerged from the sea. The local legend, recorded by Barradas, was that the Portuguese had on a certain occasion decided to steal it; 'but as they were about to do so, a cow let out a great bellow, which was heard by the Naique in Tanjaor, two days' journey from this place, and he prevented them from taking it'.[49]

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 157. 'Vi sono molti habitori portoghesi, gentili e mori; e vi é state fabricata nuovamente una fortezza, detta Ragiù da Portoghesi, per difenderla dalle scorrerie del rè di Negapatan, il quale habita in terra ferma e sta in buona amicitia co' Portoghesi'.

[48] Excerpts from these texts are to be found in *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, ed. S. Krishnaswami Ayyangar, pp. 267–302. I have benefited greatly from discussions with David Shulman on this literature; it will be dealt with in detail in D.D. Shulman, V.N. Rao and S. Subrahmanyam, *The Tamil Country under Telugu Kings*, forthcoming.

[49] Cf. Manuel Barradas, 'Discrição da Cidade de Columbo (*sic*)', in Bernardo Gomes de Brito, ed., *História Trágico-Marítima*, Volume I, Lisbon, 1735, pp. 253–307, especially pp. 276–7.

Looking in turn to São Tomé de Meliapor, the last three decades here too were marked by frequent clashes on a minor scale between the Portuguese and local authorities. These are reported in Jesuit letters in the 1590s, and early years of the seventeenth century, but they equally appear in the account of Gasparo Balbi, who – in 1583 – was actually present at one. On this occasion, the forces of the *adhikari* resident in a nearby fortress arrived in the non-Portuguese quarter of Mylapur to 'castigate' some residents there; some houses were set on fire, and one of the victims of the attack appealed to the Portuguese captain in São Tomé, Diogo Pessanha, for help. The frontier-town aspect of São Tomé emerges clearly from what follows: the captain rang the bell of the church, a signal that all able-bodied men should gather at his house, behind the *Casa da Misericórdia.* Balbi, who was asleep on this warm June night, was woken up by the sound of 'a great multitude of people who were running in a great hurry across the square, where the room of the Captain is, with arquebuses and all sorts of arms'. He himself joined them, on being informed that anyone who did not respond to the bell was known thereafter as a *patife* (oaf) and coward.[50]

While eventually no engagement was fought, since the *adhikari*'s forces departed, it is evident from this incident that such occurrences were frequent in São Tomé, and that they confirmed local Portuguese in their sense of themselves as dauntless frontiersmen. One notes too that Balbi has rapidly absorbed the Portuguese view of the *preti* (blacks) of the area as not merely *infedeli*, but poor fighters. It is known that in the early seventeenth century, some Portuguese from São Tomé even wrote to the King of Portugal that with a little additional help they could conquer a territory extending from there to Tirupati, stressing that the local people were poor-spirited and 'unused to war'.[51]

Dutch and English experiences in south-west India

If experience of the Portuguese shaped Asian perceptions of European behaviour in the sixteenth century, it was equally the Portuguese from whom the English and Dutch learned of Asia and Asians. Most English and Dutch Company servants learnt Portuguese before an Asian language, and with it they acquired a vocabulary, in which all Muslims were 'Moors', and where colour was

[50] For Balbi's description, see Pinto, ed., *Viaggi alle Indie Orientali*, pp. 162–3.
[51] See note 17 *supra.*

an important descriptive element for society. It was after 1600 that the first tentative feelers were sent out by the Dutch to the Indian west coast. Not surprisingly perhaps, most of their early attempts in south-west India centred around Calicut, where the Portuguese enterprise too had made its first contact a century earlier. But the VOC fleet under Steven van der Hagen entered the port under conditions very different from those of a century earlier; Calicut was now much reduced in importance, though still sufficiently busy to impress François Pyrard, who passed through there early in the seventeenth century. The political context too was rather different from that of May 1498. After a century of bitter struggle, interrupted only by brief truces, the Samudri *raja* of Calicut had in 1599 signed a treaty of peace with the *Estado da Índia*, in which he declared – in anticipation of their joint attack on Muhammad Kunjali Marakkar's redoubt at Ponnani – that he would from then on cease persecuting Christians, permit the edification of churches in his lands, support the Synod of Diamper on religious questions between Catholics and St. Thomas Christians, release all Portuguese and Christian prisoners, and do a number of other things, such as provide pepper for the ships of the *Carreira* at the 'usual prices of the land'. In return, the *Estado* agreed to grant him five *cartazes* every year for ships bound for Jiddah (of which two were for ships up to 600 *khandis* burthen, and the other three up to 500 *khandis*), besides which other *cartazes* were promised him for ships bound for Bengal, Aceh and the Kanara coast, provided these carried no 'contraband good'.[52] Following the attack on the fortress of the Marakkars, however, relations between the Samudri and Goa do not appear to have maintained their amicable character for long. Yet little is known of this period, since historians persist in treating the death of Muhammad Kunjali Marakkar as the end of an epoch.

We do know that as early as 1602, the Samudri *raja* sent messages to Aceh, where the Verenigde Zeeuwsche Compagnie (one of the Dutch pre-companies) had a factory, promising the Hollanders a fortress at Calicut if they would come and trade there. In response to this offer, two factors Hans de Wolff and Lafer were sent from Aceh on an Asian ship; however, the expedition met with disaster when the two were captured by the *raja* of Tanur, and handed over to the *Estado*'s authorities, who carried them to Goa and there duly hanged them.[53] Following this incident of 1603, the desire of the Samudris to

[52] The text of this agreement is to be found in Judice Biker, ed., *Colecção de Tratados e Concertos de Pazes*, Volume XIV, pp. 28–31.

[53] M.A.P. Roelofsz., *De Vestiging der Nederlanders ter Kuste Malabar*, pp. 29–30.

encourage the northern Europeans did not diminish. Indeed, it is clear that the alliance between the *Estado* and the Calicut rulers was impracticable, so long as Cochin and Calicut continued to be rivals in a territorial sense, and a stable balance of power was not achieved. In 1604 then, we see the arrival at Calicut of a VOC fleet under Steven van der Hagen, this fleet having first threatened Goa, and later putting in at Cannanore to enquire after trading prospects. Van der Hagen and the Samudri signed a treaty on 11 November 1604, which was to prefigure those of subsequent decades.[54] In it, the Dutch promised to send ships and to open a factory as soon as possible. As a sop to the Samudri's ambitions, it was declared besides that in future no ship would be allowed to sail from any point between Goa and Cape Comorin, without a *cartaz* from the *raja*. The Dutch promised to enforce this rule vigorously.

The reactions of the *Estado da Índia* as well as those of the authorities in Spain to this development were somewhat naive. The King of Spain, in letters to the Kolathiri, the Samudri *raja* and the *raja* of Purakkad, all written in 1606, thanked them individually for the favour they had done him in 'not admitting the Dutch rebels into the ports of your kingdoms, with pretensions of settling factories in them, and receiving cargoes of pepper for their carracks'.[55] This was innocence of a high order, since in Cannanore, the Kolathiri and Ali Raja had welcomed the VOC fleet, which had been forced to leave prematurely only because they felt unprepared to enter into pitched battle with the Portuguese garrison there, while in Calicut, a treaty had actually been signed. That the VOC were unable to make anything of the Portuguese weakness reflects their own lack of resources, a fact that becomes still clearer in the visit to Calicut by Admiral Verhoef in October 1608. In the interim, a fleet under Paulus van Caerden had visited Calicut in November 1607, stopping only to renew the earlier contract.[56] Verhoef for his part signed an agreement of a more specific nature, on 13 October 1608, from the text of which the character of the Samudri's preoccupations emerges rather clearly. Besides swearing enmity with the Portuguese, he requested aid in attacking not only the *Estado* but the rulers of

[54] For the text of this treat, see J.E. Heeres, ed., *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*, Deel I (1595–1650), The Hague, 1907, pp. 30–1; also Roelofsz., *Vestiging*, pp. 32–6; J.K.J. de Jonge, *De Opkomst van het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indië (1595–1610)*, Deel III, The Hague, 1865, p. 150.

[55] *HAG*, Monções do Reino 6A, fls. 116–18. Also see P.S.S. Pissurlencar, 'Rivalidade Luso-Holandesa na Índia durante a Dominação Filipina', *Boletim do Instituto Vasco da Gama*, nos. 47 and 49, pp. 3–6.

[56] Roelofsz., *Vestiging*, pp. 36–7.

Cochin as well. Verhoef could promise him no more than two ships from Banten with 'well qualified merchants' on board, asking for a factory site in return. Yet, on his arrival in the Archipelago, he was informed by Jacques l'Hermite de Jonghe, Governor of the Dutch East Indies, that there were other pressing needs – particularly in Ternate and Tidore – so that no ships from Banten could be spared at all.[57]

The pattern that emerges defines well enough the early VOC policy in respect of Malabar. On the one hand, they had a willing ally – Calicut – on the other a potential trading post in Cannanore; yet the resources to sustain neither the one nor the other were forthcoming. It was believed that the Indonesian Archipelago was the first priority, since, in any case, pepper was to be had there, and at a much lower cost in terms of military effort than in Malabar. Besides, Sumatran pepper was held, even by the Portuguese, to be at least as good as the best to be had in south-western India. It was felt, however, that the Malabar enterprise ought not to be allowed to die out, and from time to time missions were sent there to stir things up. In 1610, two factors, Cornelis Jacobsz van Breekvelt and Hans Bullard, arrived at Calicut and re-promulgated the old treaty, adding to it some new clauses such as that no issues of religion would be raised by either party.[58] Again, some six years later, Pieter van den Broecke put in at Calicut on his way from Surat to Banten. On this occasion, the Samudri was found to be in the interior, fighting a border war with the *raja* of Cochin, and his son asked the Dutch for aid. The VOC promptly excused itself, declaring that Verhoef, who had signed the earlier agreement had been murdered, and that 'his Excellency the Governor-General would in the coming year send a fleet there.'[59] While the Fleet of Defence did pass that way some years later, on its mission to blockade Goa, it was almost a decade before the next Dutch embassy found itself in Calicut. To start with, then, the ambience was not a little inauspicious.

Once we bear the foregoing history in mind, relations between Calicut and the English Company become far simpler to understand. To the Samudri *rajas*, the purpose of relations with both Dutch and

[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 41–5; Heeres, ed., *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Deel I, pp. 53–4.

[58] Heeres, ed., *Corpus Diplomaticum*, pp. 544–6. 'Niemand aan beiden zeiden en zal vermogen eeinge questie, ofte arguatie, ende disputatie van de Religie te maken'. This closely parallels the test of the agreement on the Coromandel coast between Arend Maertszoon and Tiruvengalaiya, *dalavay* of Senji, dated 29 March 1610, for which see Heeres, ed., *Corpus*, I, pp. 78–81. Contrast this to the treaty between the *Estado da Índia* and the Samudri *raja*, cited in n. 52 *supra.*

[59] *Vide* W. Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *Pieter van de Broecke in Azië*, Volume I, pp. 116–18.

English was essentially identical; given antagonistic relations with Cochin – which was populated in part by Portuguese and *mestiço* traders, under the protection of the *Estado da Índia*, and the site of a major fort garrisoned with Portuguese soldiers – there was little choice in the matter but to redress the balance by bringing in a countervailing power. The Dutch, some fifteen years after the Samudri's first approach made to them, had promised much and delivered almost nothing, so that he now turned to the English Company. The earlier experience of the English Company on the Malabar coast had been restricted to occasional encounters with ships from the ports of that region in Mocha, Surat and elsewhere. In September 1610, the English factors at Mocha were even approached by the head of the Mappila community there to protect their shipping in that region from the *Estado*'s fleets. There can be little doubt that every trading community, as well as littoral power, in the western Indian Ocean knew by 1610 where the Dutch and the English stood *vis-à-vis* the *Estado*. We are not surprised therefore to learn that the Samudri *raja* had a message sent to a passing English fleet, *en route* from Surat to Banten in March 1616, inviting the Captain ashore. William Keeling, the commander of the ships, on going ashore signed a treaty with the Samudri, and set up a factory at Cranganore provisionally.[60] The treaty makes fascinating reading. It begins with the *raja* declaring that 'as heretofore I have ever been an enemy of the Portuguese, so I purpose to continue for ever'. He then asks for English help to take the Portuguese fort at Cranganore, as well as 'the fort and town of Cochin, belonging formerly to my Crown and kingdom', on the understanding that he would 'then deliver it into the possession of the English as their own'. He goes on to assure the English Company freedom from all tolls, and promises to share the expenses of the military campaigns equally.[61] The English, in contrast to their Dutch counterparts, swung quickly into action. By April 1616, the factory had been moved to Calicut itself, and a factor George Woolman sent there with a stock of tin, benzoin and other goods, of which he declared, 'they are very good presents but bad merchandise'.[62]

[60] Agreement between the Zamorin of Calicut and King James I of England, dated 10 March 1616, published in Danvers and Foster, eds., *Letters Received by the East India Company*, Volume IV (1616), pp. 64–5.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 65. 'The Samorin to have thenceforward no right, title, or interest in the town, fortress, precincts or appurtenances of Cochin at all', i.e. once the capture had been effected.
[62] George Woolman at Calicut to Captain Pepwell, 15 July 1616, *Letters Received*, pp. 318–19.

The English Company made the mistake however of seeing the agreement as essentially commercial in nature. To the Samudri *raja* on the other hand, what was of importance was the military aspect, the aid the English were to give him in fighting his wars. After an initial phase when local merchants were encouraged by him to buy up the textile stock of the English factory, matters deteriorated. Woolman declared the local pepper too expensive, at twenty-eight rials of eight a *bahar*, while the Samudri soon found that the English – far from encouraging him in his military exploits – were themselves so timid that they would not even write to Surat, for fear the Portuguese would discover their presence. Nor were matters improved when the factor Woolman died in August 1616, since his assistant thereupon fled to Cochin, to seek his fortune in private trade there.[63] Relations soured thereafter, as the Samudri, finding the English as unreliable as their Dutch counterparts where military aid was concerned, took over the effects of the factory. In the meantime, innocent of these developments, the English Council at Surat had decided that the earlier decision on the Calicut factory had to be reconsidered. When it was discovered that matters had taken such a turn, the factory was wound up in March 1617, the English nursing a grudge against the 'beggarly, false Samorine', who, they felt, had unjustly stolen their effects.[64] In February 1619, the Surat factors wrote to London that the Malabar coast was not worth troubling about, as they had found from their dealings with 'a Samorine of that countrie so miserably poore as hee would be glad of occacion to eate your stocke'.[65] Yet, as late as October 1621, the United Fleet of Defence was instructed by the English to try and collect some 3,000 rials of eight that the Samudri owed them, though they added sourly, 'You shall finde good words from him and faire promises, but if you get any satisfactione, it is more than we can expect from him'.[66] Though tempted to – as they put it – 'pay ourselves out of his vessels', the English Council decided against it, since they still held out hopes of settling a factory at Calicut.

We observe then in the early relations between the Dutch and English Companies, on the one hand, and the rulers of the Malabar coastal principalities on the other, that the two parties were essentially at cross-purposes. The Calicut *rajas* were not overly

63 Roelofsz, *De Vestiging*, pp. 49–50; *Letters Received*, p. 64; *Letters Received*, Volume V, pp. 21, 49, *passim*.

64 Thomas Roe to Captain Martin Pring, 8 November 1617, *Letters Received*, Volume VI, p. 156.

65 Surat to the Company, February 1619, in *EFI [1618–1621]*, p. 55.

66 Supplementary Instructions of the United Council at Batavia to the Fleet of Defence, 6 October 1621, *EFI [1618–21]*, p. 290.

concerned with the Companies' trade in the short-term, seeing their principal role as the alteration of the regional balance of military power, through liberal loans and sales of guns, ammunition and military expertise. The Companies on the other hand were anxious to avoid such a militarisation of trade in this particular region, believing that they could not sustain themselves there in conditions of open conflict with the *Estado da Índia*. Their aim was hence to be as inconspicuous as they could, playing down to the extent possible, the issue of military aid to Calicut. It was not until the VOC became prepared to challenge the *Estado* militarily in the region that an accommodation was possible, and this was a solution that could not come about as long as their military energies were concentrated by and large in south-east Asia. And when it eventually did come about, the Malabar rulers may well have felt that they had traded in King Log for King Stork.

The Companies on Coromandel, 1605–50

There are many who believe today, as has already been noted at the outset of this chapter, that the Companies – in their attitude towards Asians, in their trading practices, and above all in their use of force as well as in their willingness to use force – differed substantially from the Portuguese before them. There are of course statements in the Company archives which appear to lend credence to such a view. For instance, in October 1651, the *Heren XVII* of the Dutch East India Company wrote to the Governor-General in Batavia:

> It is not strange that the Moors from around Masulipatnam equip many ships to diverse quarters, since the land is great and this nation are merchants by nature, but it has always seemed strange to us that some of our employees should be of the opinion that one can and ought to deprive the Moors of their seaborne trade, this being far from our policies, which are as follows: that one must try to get along with all nations, and especially those with which we have no exclusive contract, using to this end all the friendly means to make ourselves popular, and eschewing all hard procedures, which cause aversion, and make people seek means to rid themselves of the yoke, which fact the Portuguese, who intended to dominate the whole of India finally came to realise, in which they must serve us as examples.[67]

These were noble words, no doubt, but it is significant that they had to be written in the first place. Even if the *Heren Mayores* felt this way (of which there is some question), there is clearly a great deal of

[67] See *A.R.*, OB, VOC. 317, Letters of the Heren XVII to the Governor-General and Council at Batavia, letter dated 14 October 1651.

doubt whether the sentiments of VOC employees in Asia ran along these lines. The policies under Coen, and under van Diemen, far from being the *personal* excesses of particular individuals, as they are sometimes portrayed, represent a rather wider phenomenon. The first adherents of *Mare Liberum* were also amongst those who issued *cartazes*, sealed off ports to rivals and blockaded others, and were not above such tactics as training their guns on a port and demanding a ransom, or on another occasion, decamping with a metal idol from a Hindu temple, as a 'hostage'. As we shall see, there are significant instances of the use of force by both English and Dutch (and Danes) in this period, whether against Asians or against Europeans. Needless to say, both English and Dutch fought the Iberians in Asia in the first half of the seventeenth century, but this is not our focus here, for it could always be argued that it was the *Iberian* claim to monopoly over the eastern trade which forced their north-west European rivals in this direction.[68] Instead we shall look to how this age of contained conflict is manifest in the history of the north-west European presence in Asian waters, in their relations with Asians, and with Europeans other than the Spanish and Portuguese.

Like the Portuguese, neither the English nor the Dutch believed that they indulged in gratuitous violence. If force was used, it was always *just* force, and in an age which they too – like their Iberian counterparts – thought of as a violent one, there were a large number of occasions where such just force seemed apposite. A particular revealing set of incidents in this respect comes from the first English Voyage to Coromandel, that of the ship *Globe* in 1611–14. As an expedition, this was an unusual one, for, although the ship was English (as was most of the crew and capital), the chief merchants were both Dutch. In fact, the voyage itself had been the idea of a certain Pieter Willemsz van Elbing, who had earlier served the VOC in Masulipatnam and elsewhere; while in the employ of the English, he used the name Peter Floris (under which he is generally known to modern-day historians).[69]

Willemsz first arrived in the *Globe* on the Coromandel coast in August 1611, and put in at Masulipatnam at the end of that month. Having considerable familiarity with the port and with some of the important Persians of the kingdom, Willemsz soon arrived at

[68] Cf. Leonard Blussé and George D. Winius, 'The origin and rhythm of Dutch aggression against the *Estado da Índia, 1601–1661*', in De Souza, ed., *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions.*

[69] W.H. Moreland, ed., *Peter Floris – His Voyage to the East Indies in the 'Globe', 1611–1615*, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1934, pp. xiv-xv, xxxvi-lxii.

accommodations, in which there is some suspicion that he exploited his position as a Dutchman. In particular, the ease with which he claims to have received the same terms as the Dutch (namely 4 per cent import duties and 4 per cent export duties), suggest that he did not reveal his precise position in this venture to the *shahbandar*, or *havaldar*, at that time a certain Mir Sadruddin.

As we shall see ahead, Willemsz was a man who involved himself repeatedly in incidents of actual or potential violence. W.H. Moreland, the editor of his journal, who was extremely sympathetic to him, has tended to see all these incidents as having been the result of unreasonable behaviour on the part of those whom 'Floris' encountered, especially local officials in Golconda, '[who] had the strongest possible motives for collecting every penny [they] could, without regard to the future of a region with which [their] connection might be merely temporary'.[70] Yet Willemsz's own journal, if read with regard for detail, suggests a more complex picture. We know for instance that he was a harsh disciplinarian, who – when two of his subordinates fought a duel over some personal differences – 'founde it good to punishe this faulte to the uttermooste; and therefore condemned theym both thryce to bee drawen under the shipps keele, and then to bee nayled with a knife thorough theyr hand att the mayne maste, and there to stande till they pulled it quite thoroughe their hands'.[71] Only the intervention of the Persian Darya Khan, resident at Narsapur, and on friendly terms with one of the two men so condemned, saved them from this fate. But this incident was no exception. Again in November 1614, he writes of how 'I wente aboorde [the *Globe*] for the correction of some insolent fellowes, so that I caused 9 men, being mooste all officers, to bee caste from the yarde, and broughte 2 to the captayne [capstan?]; as more att large appeareth by the judgement given in that behalfe'.

One should stress here that Willemsz was acting in a manner perfectly in keeping with Dutch and English functioning in Asia; at about the same time, the Dutch in Pulicat were involved in hanging, drawing and beheading a Spaniard in their employ, whom they believed to be secretly in the pay of the Portuguese of São Tomé, leaving his head impaled on the gate of the *Casteel Geldria* in Pulicat as a 'lesson to others'.[72] Now, a man brought up in such a harsh

[70] See for example, Moreland's, *Peter Floris*, comments, p. xxii; these built on his earlier views, expounded at length in his *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, and based on the texts that were to form *Relations of Golconda in the Early 17th Century*.
[71] Moreland, *Peter Floris*, pp. 125, 133.
[72] On the incident of the Spaniard, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 202–3v, *passim*.

school was unlikely to treat the Asians he met with the greatest of delicacy, and this emerges directly from Willemsz's first visit to Masulipatnam on the *Globe*. There is the strange incident of an altercation between him and Mir Sadruddin in January 1612, in which the latter claimed to have contracted with Williemsz for the delivery of textiles valued at 4,000 *pagodas*; the Dutchman for his part claimed that these 'were the greateste lyes that were ever spoken of mee in my presence', and demanded that Sadruddin produce either witnesses, or a contract on paper, to back up his claim. This incensed the *havaldar*, who threatened to force the English Company to pay customs at the normal rate of 12 per cent rather than at the lower rate which the VOC was allowed, and also declared that 'hee was a Mir and sayde hee was borne of Mahomet posteritie, and that his woords were of more strengthe then myne, being a Christian'.[73] Eventually, a compromise was effected, in which Willemsz agreed to buy one parcel of textiles, at which Sadruddin 'shewed mee the best countenance hee coulde possibly'; the *Globe* then left for Banten and Patani.

It is curious that when Willemsz returned to Masulipatnam in December 1613, he once again embroiled himself in difficulties with the local authorities. By now the position of *havaldar* had come to a Niyogi Brahmin called Sidappa (or Basubal Rao), who also held the revenue farm of the west Godavari region. Since the *Globe* needed repairs at the shipyard at Narsapurpettai, Willemsz was forced to show favour to Sidappa, and contracted with him for the sum of 5,000 *pagodas*, to be repaid in textiles, indigo, cotton yarn, iron and other goods.[74] Although these deliveries were to be made in four months, the *Globe*'s repairs took considerably longer; hence, it was only in early August 1614 that Willemsz thought of the 'getting in of my dettes, which were reasonnably many and came in very slowlye'. He seems to have quickly come to the conclusion that Sidappa was not about to deliver the whole value of the goods, and it is clear that by mid August, Willemsz was contemplating violent retaliation. His first thought was that 'seing heere were 2 shipps to go for Pegu by halfe September [and] ... the shipp [*Globe*] would bee over the barre by that tyme, and then I would have arrested these 2 shipps till I had beene fully payde ... [but] till the shipp was over the barre I durste

[73] *Peter Floris*, pp. 18–20. For a clear Dutch articulation on 'Persian tyranny and insolence', also see *AR* (loose papers), VOC. 548, 'Rapport (Informatie) door Lodewyck Isacz overgelevert over de handel op de Kust van Coromandel, z.d. (1608)'; a less legible version of the same may be found in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1055.

[74] Moreland, *Peter Floris*, pp. 114–15.

nott utter my meaning'. However, it was not until early October that the *Globe* returned from repairs, and by this time the ships bound for Burma had departed. Willemsz's next thought was to await the vessel from the Red Sea, which was yet to return. But here too, he was thwarted, since this ship wintered at Dabhol instead of returning directly home from Jiddah.[75]

Hearing this, Willemsz writes, 'I was very sorry, as being nowe destitute of all my pandes, uppon which I might make any accounte. God helpe me.' With these fine sentiments, he resolved on a 'desperate peece of service'. This was 'to carry the Gouvernour or his sone from the custome howse aboord', and hold them hostage. So that, armed with muskets wrapped up in sailcloth, Willemsz led fifteen men on shore in secret, and entered the cutoms house; on the first two occasions they attempted this, they failed as 'there were to [too] many Moores in the cutome howse'. Finally, on 24 November, having first ensured that the *havaldar*'s son Venkatadri was unprotected in the garden of the customs house, Willemsz resolved to enact a small drama; he approached Sidappa, feigning anger, and demanded repayment, declaring with 'bigg threatning words that I woulde not any longer bee made a foole'. This was done in order to make the 'arrest' of Venkatadri appear a spontaneous affair, rather than a long-contemplated action, which it was. Having thus set the stage, Willemsz departed from Sidappa's presence in a feigned huff, and proceeded to the garden. Here, he seized the unsuspecting hostage and 'helde Wencatadra arrested by the armes till 2 or 3 [helpers] came to mee, who taking him in theyr armes carryed him into the boate'. This was soon discovered though, and the *havaldar*'s men 'came with might and mayne to pursue us', but the English by firing their muskets dispersed this pursuit and arrived on the *Globe*.[76]

Negotiations now followed, with the Dutch chief, Wemmer van Berchem, and the Sultan's interpreter playing intermediary. The Dutch were understandably nervous at Willemsz's action; for being a Dutchman and former employee of that Company in Masulipatnam, there was always the possibility that the VOC would be held responsible for his actions. These negotiations continued for almost five days, and 'in the meane tyme [writes Willemsz] poore Wencatadra remayned aboord without eating or drincking, for hee, being a

[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 129–33. For further details, see Danvers, ed., *Letters Received*, Volume III [1611–1615], *passim*.
[76] Moreland, *Peter Floris*, pp. 135–6.

Bramene, maye neyther eate nor drinke in anybodies howse but what hee dressed himselfe'. Finally on 30 November, an exchange was effected, with van Berchem standing surety for Willemsz, and Mir Muhammad Tahir for Sidappa,[77] and the *havaldar* sent some goods on board once Venkatadri was returned to him. In early December then, the *Globe* departed, with Willemsz congratulating himself for what he regarded as an action carried out with the greatest of finesse.

It is important to note that this set of tactics was used again and again in the decades that followed. In the late 1620s, the Dutch and English joined hands to hold to ransom the entire trading fleet of Masulipatnam, save those which prudently made their way to other ports. While doing so, the Companies did not differentiate friend from foe; even such 'Moores' as had in the past interceded for the Companies in local politics, or had traded extensively with the Europeans found their ships and goods used as 'pandes' (to borrow Willemsz's *Nederengels* phrase) in the venture. The same tactics were used by the Danes too, once in the 1620s, and again repeatedly in the late 1630s and early 1640s.[78] And once the French arrived on the Coast in the late 1660s, they too adopted the same etiquette. The Spanish friar Domingo Navarrete provides us a description of one incident at Masulipatnam, in 1670, when the French imprisoned an Armenian in their Company's service, who happened to have a great many friends among the Persians of Masulipatnam and Golconda. The *havaldar* of Masulipatnam, Muhammad Baig, demanded the Armenian's release, and sent a force to surround the French factory. An altercation resulted in which one Frenchman and several Asians were killed; the French decided to arm themselves with muskets which the English and others lent them. Fortunately, the incident ended without further bloodshed, on the intercession of the Golconda court.[79]

In fact, by the early 1670s, such occurrences were taken in their stride by Europeans, many of whom (like Dr John Fryer), believed that they only served to reinforce the natives' perception of their own

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 138–9; also see L.C.D van Dijk, *Zes Jaren uit het Leven van Wemmer van Berchem*, Amsterdam, 1858.

[78] On the incidents of 1629, see *EFI [1624–29]*, pp. 280–4, 315–16, 339–42, as also *AR*, OB, VOC. 1098, fls. 489, 507; VOC. 1100, fls. 63–4. On Danish actions, see Kay Larsen, *De Dansk-Ostindiske Koloniers Historie: Trankebar*, Copenhagen, 1907, pp. 30–2, and *AR*, OB, VOC. 1094, fls. 96–6v; VOC. 1095, fl. 70v; VOC. 1138, fl. 414; VOC. 1147, fl. 581.

[79] *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1618–1686*, ed. J.S. Cummins, 2 Volumes, London, 1962, Volume II, pp. 322–5.

inferiority and the prowess of European arms. Visiting Masulipatnam in the early 1670s, the good doctor wrote of how the Gentues 'are all of them of Disposition timerous, so that Twenty-four English-men armed kept the Bank Solls [customs-house] against them on a late Demur'. This 'demur' was occasioned by the fact that an English Company employee 'too incautiously had to deal with some of their Women', consequent upon which the English factory was denied wood and water, as well as other supplies, and besieged, 'till they had their Revenge on the Aggressor'. The man responsible seems to have ventured out of the factory to plead his case, whereupon 'he was cut to pieces before the Factory gate'. The English now 'drew out some field pieces and scowred the streets, when they fled and left the Bank-Solls to their possession'. Fryer concluded, in keeping with the times, that this revealed how the natives had 'the true nature of Cowards, who when Peril is far from them, strike with all Lightning; but when it appears on equal terms, presently discover the wonted Paleness of an unsound Virtue'.[80]

To conclude this section, then, these incidents, or numerous others – such as one involving the Dutch is Peddapalli in the 1630s, another the English at Viravasaram in the same decade, or the attack on the Dutch factory at Masulipatnam in 1667 after the ship to the Red Sea was attacked and sunk by a Swedish privateer, flying a French flag, and captained by a Dutchman – are not the exceptions to some rule of general bonhomie.[81] Nor indeed do they necessarily demonstrate, as Ashin Das Gupta has argued, that the period was one in which 'for much of the time [there was] the acceptance of a structure of trade and politics within which everybody functioned'. The incidents cited above stand in logical progression to later ones, the abortive Dutch attempt to take over Masulipatnam in the 1680s, English attacks on the Mughal domains in the 1690s, and the incidents which Das Gupta himself has studied in such detail, concerning Surat in about 1700. To lose sight of this is to endow with a false character an age in which conflict was never far from the surface.

Intra-European conflict, 1610–50

That the age under discussion was an age of violence and conflict emerges as much from studying intra-European relations within Asia,

[80] Cf. John Fryer, *A New Account of East-India and Persia in Eight Letters*, London, 1698, pp. 31–2.

[81] On the Peddapalli incident, *AR*, O.B., VOC. 1119, fls. 1115–16, 1139–40, 1158–69; on that in Viravasaram, see *EFI [1637–41]*, *passim*. Finally on the

as in considering the relations between Europeans and Asians. Here, we shall eschew a discussion of the most obvious aspects of that conflict – the Luso-Dutch struggle, for instance, or the Anglo-Dutch conflict over control of the Spice Islands, or even the Anglo-Portuguese conflict which was particularly of importance between 1608 and 1625 in the western Indian Ocean.[82] Instead, we shall be concerned, to discuss some incidents, which demonstrate that, even where trade on the Cape Route was concerned, the Companies – in particular the Dutch – were willing to use force to exclude others, and on one significant occasion, even joined forces with the Portuguese to this end.

These incidents not only demonstrate that, as a Dutch historian has recently put it, the use of violence was an intrinsic part of the market strategy of the Dutch Company from as early as 1615 or 1620 (if not earlier still),[83] but that the process of expanding into markets was often at the cost of other European rivals. Moreover, the barriers to entry by which these partial or complete monopolies operated, once created, were backed by live ammunition. Such a recourse to violence, rather than allow prices to do the talking (as it were), was not confined to the intra-Asian aspect of the activities of these Companies. Equally, the Dutch Company jealously guarded its privileges on the Cape route, ignoring Grotius's strictures on the question of *Mare Liberum* and *Mare Clausum*. We know this to be the case from stray incidents of the first three decades of the seventeenth century; the Dutch were hostile, for example, to the first Danish expeditions (though not resorting to open violence), but were far stronger in their reactions to the Norman ship *La Magdaleine*, which they attacked in 1616, torturing some of its crew and hanging others.[84] Other French expeditions of the 1610s and early 1620s equally met with hostility, overt and covert,[85] and it is even possible to see in Dutch factors' writings of the period an unconscious echo of the very attitudes of the

incident of the late 1660s, concerning the Swedish privateer, *EFI [1665–67]*, pp. 31–2, 331–2, and P.S.S. Pissurlencar, ed., *Assentos do Concelho do Estado [1659–1695]*, Goa, 1956, pp. 149–51.

82 For an overview of Luso-Dutch conflict, see C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825*, London, 1969, which sums up the author's numerous writings on the subject. On the Anglo-Dutch struggle, see *inter alia* George Masselman, *The Cradle of Colonialism*, New Haven, 1963. For a particular aspect of the Luso-Dutch struggle in south India, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'The "Pulicat Enterprise": Luso-Dutch conflict in south-eastern India, 1610–1640', *South Asia*, 1986.

83 van Santen, 'De VOC in Gujarat en Hindustan', p. 208.

84 C. and P. Breard, *Documents relatifs à la marine normande et à ses armements au XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, Rouen, 1899, p. 217.

85 Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600–1800*, pp. 201–2; also see Om Prakash, ed., *The Dutch Factories in India, 1617–1623*, pp. 31–3, 35.

Portuguese which they had decried late in the sixteenth century. By these and other means, including an admittedly well-oiled economic machinery, a comfortable capital position, and some thoughful strategic moves, the Dutch had by the early 1630s made their Company much envied in Europe. Envy translated in many cases into attempts at emulation; such was the case in Portugal (the East India Company of 1628 to 1633, and the Brazil Company of the 1650s and thereafter), and later in Ostend and Sweden. It was also most certainly the case in Genoa in the 1640s.

It is well-known that the Genoese had commanded a good share of the Oriental trade in the centuries preceding the discovery of the Cape route to Asia. By the late fifteenth century however, their role in this trade had been overshadowed to a large extent by the Venetians. Besides, while the early sixteenth century Portuguese expansion into the Indian Ocean struck primarily at the Venetians, it did not assist Genoa to any great extent either.[86] The sixteenth century Genoese economy was beset by other problems too, notably the lack of availability of food, which meant a growing dependence on imported supplies. Repeated famines in the sixteenth century suggest an image of an urban centre whose economic vitality was seriously in question; if a temporary recovery in trade and artisanal production is perceptible in the 1550s and 1560s, this was soon reversed. The contemporary polemicist Paolo Foglietta wrote of the city in the late sixteenth century, 'Genova ha cambiato in fame l'antica fama' ('Genoa has exchanged its old fame for famine'), and there was at least a grain of truth in this wry witticism.[87]

Despite another phase of recovery which followed the major crisis of the 1590s, the second quarter of the sixteenth century once again found the Genoese economy in some difficulties, in particular where commerce was concerned. This period – recently described as a 'long phase of depression and difficulties of every sort'[88] – was marked by a

[86] See Jacques Heers, 'Portugais et Genois au XVe siècle: La Rivalité Atlantique-Méditerranée', reprinted in Heers, *Société et Économie à Gênes (XIVe-XVe siècles)*, London, 1979, IV: 147. Also see Gian Giacomo Musso, *Navigazione e Commercio Genovese con il levante nei documenti dell' Archivio di Stato di Genova (secc. XIV-XV)*, Rome, 1975, on the Genoese role in Euro-Asian trade in the pre-Vasco da Gama period.

[87] Cited in Claudio Costantini, *La Repubblica di Genova nell' età moderna*, Storia d'Italia, ed. Giuseppe Galasso, Volume IX, Turin, 1978, p. 75. I have relied extensively on Costantini's excellent synthetic work for general background on Genoese history in the epoch.

[88] Danilo Presotto, 'Da Genova alle Indie alla metà del seicento: un singolare contratto di arruolamento marittimo', in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, N.S., Volume IX, 1969, p. 71.

political crisis, which buttressed the economic one. To the invasions by Savoy of Genoese territory were added the problems of the plague, and on to these were heaped the repeated bankruptcies of the Spanish treasury, where the Genoese mercantile class had a substantial financial interest. Things were little improved in the 1630s, when Genoa found itself threatened by piracy in the Mar Ligure, and in a precarious position of neutrality in the Franco-Spanish war. All this must have made the Dutch model appear that much more attractive: for what better way to refloat the fortunes of a small nation than through this new innovation – the chartered Company? The Dutch had long been the objects of an ill-concealed admiration on the part of the Genoese, and – as Claudio Costantini puts it – '[even if] heretics and rebels, the Dutch incarnated a model of civil and economic organisation, perhaps inapplicable to Genoa, but suggestive nonetheless'.[89] On the other hand, Genoese shipping and maritime resources were, by the 1630s, at a low ebb. In the course of the sixteenth century, the Genoese trading fleet had scarcely grown at all (and may even have shrunk slightly between 1509 and the 1590s, according to some estimates); besides, from the late sixteenth century, they were being overwhelmed in the harbour of Genoa itself by foreign ships – mostly Dutch, but also English, and of the other northern nations.[90]

The first of the Companies to be created in Genoa 'all' olandese' (in the Dutch manner), was the Compagnia di Nostra Signora di Libertà, formed in the late 1630s by the Giustiniani brothers, together with Raffaele Della Torre and Agostino Centurione. This company, whose creation was approved after some hesitation by the Genoese Senate, began its operations by organising an expedition to Sicily for silk procurement.[91] The first voyage was a considerable success, and the profits poured in, as did investors eager to sink money in the venture; Raffaele Della Torre even began to think that finances might become sufficiently comfortable to float an enterprise of the dimensions of the Dutch Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie – no less! But the bubble was pricked the very next year, when the Company's trade to Naples and Sicily encountered the opposition

[89] Costantini, *La Repubblica di Genova*, p. 172, '... gli olandesi incarnavano un modello di organizzazione economica e civile, forse inapplicabile in Genova, ma non per questo meno suggestivo'.
[90] Edoardo Grendi, 'Traffico portuale, naviglio mercantile e consolati genovesi nel cinquecento', *Rivista Storicà Italiana*, Volume 80 (3), 1968, pp. 593–638; *Idem*, 'I nordici e il traffico del porto di Genova, 1590–1666', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, Volume 83 (1), 1971, pp. 23–71. Finally, for a synthetic account, see Costantini, *Genova*, pp. 164–72.
[91] Costantini, *Genova*, pp. 306–10.

both of interested parties in Spain, and of a powerful faction in Genoa itself. When the second voyage failed to pay dividends, the Company of Nostra Signora di Libertà folded up unceremoniously. But the idea had taken root. The Doge, Agostino Pallavicini, himself had an eye on the India trade, and the notion was explicitly to emulate the English and Dutch. On the face of it, the 1640s appeared to be a good time to embark on such a venture. The Netherlands and Portugal (the latter having just emerged from sixty years of Spanish rule) had recently signed a Truce, which was in the process of being implemented piece-meal in Asia.[92] The spice trade in Europe was booming, with Dutch profits in particular showing the positive effects of the conquest of Melaka, and of the tightening up on the 'contraband' trade in cloves to Makassar.[93]

Besides, it was not the Genoese alone who were interested in promoting such a venture. The monopoly enjoyed by the VOC over the trade of Asia, sanctified by an act of the States-General of the Netherlands, stuck in the craw of at least a few Dutch merchants. One of these, Willem Meulman, a resident of Amsterdam, was in a particularly good position to give expression to his grievances – since his brother Hendrik had for an extended period resided in Genoa and was in the 1640s the Dutch Consul there. Hendrik Meulman boasted close relations with the leading merchants of Genoa, and they for their part (for the reasons already discussed) needed no great persuasion to move towards setting up an East India Company.[94] The Meulman brothers promised to have the ships for the Company's Asian voyages secretly constructed in Holland along the lines of the Dutch East Indiamen, and also agreed to arrange for expert steersmen, merchants and mariners to help staff the vessels. It is probable too that they had a part interest in the venture.

This 'Compagnia di Negotio', or 'Compagnia Genovese delle Indie Orientali', was formed then in early 1647, with a capital of 100,000 *scudi,* of which a substantial amount belonged to the principal participants in the earlier Company of Nostra Signora di Libertà.[95] There are also indications that some other leading Genoese families – the Invrea, the Fieschi, and the Centurione – took an

[92] Cf. Charles R. Boxer, 'Portuguese and Dutch colonial rivalry, 1641–1661', *Studia,* no. 2, 1958, pp. 7–42.

[93] This period is discussed in some detail in Chapter 4 above.

[94] Costantini, *Genova,* pp. 315–17; J.E. Heeres, ed., *Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel,* Volume III, The Hague, 1895, letter from the Governor-General and Council at Batavia dated 31 December 1649, p. 466; finally see the mentions of Enrico Mülman in E. Grendi, 'I nordici e il traffico del porto di Genova', pp. 45–6.

[95] Costantini, *Genova;* Presotto, 'Da Genova alle Indie', pp. 74–5.

interest in the venture. There are at least three sets of contemporary sources which touch on the brief history of this Company. First, there are the sources originating from the Genoese archives, examined in some detail by Giuseppe Pessagno over a half-century ago, and more recently discussed by Presotto and Costantini.[96] These sources, and the historians who have made use of them, tend to focus exclusively on the Genoese perceptions of the venture, and see it almost solely in the context of the history of that city-state. A second set of sources, explored late in the last century by N.P. van den Berg, is the Dutch, and includes both the records of the VOC's organs in the Netherlands, Batavia and elsewhere in Asia, and private memoirs – of which the most important is that of the sailmaker and traveller Jan Janszoon Struijs, who ventured on the Genoese expedition to Asia at the age of seventeen.[97] But van den Berg's summary of events, while undoubtedly useful, is beset in turn by two problems: a lack of access to sources other than the Dutch, and a singular lack of sympathy for all those who would oppose Dutch sovereignty as vested in the VOC. And finally, there is a third set of sources, which have to my knowledge never been explored. These are the Portuguese documents on the affair, which fill out the picture to a certain extent, and reveal an unsuspected Portuguese dimension to the episode. These documents are principally letters exchanged between the Hague and Lisbon, and Lisbon and Goa, and appended to one is a brief but engaging account penned by an anonymous Genoese merchant resident at Goa, of the whole venture.[98] In what follows, we shall attempt a synthesis of all three sets of sources, before proceeding to our conclusion.

The Company that had been formed early in 1647 had as its

96 Giuseppe Pessagno, 'Il Commercio dei Genovesi', in Carlo Mioli, ed., *La Consulta dei Mercanti Genovesi, 1805–1927*, Genoa, 1928, pp. 9–38, especially pp. 35–6; Pessagno, *La grande navigazione al secolo XVII e la Compagnia delle Indie Orientali*, Genoa, 1930. Also see the writings of Costantini and Presotto, *ibidem*.

97 See N.P. van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie der Edelen van Genua (1648–49), in *Tijdschrift voor Indische taal- land- en volkenkunde*, Volume 24, Batavia, 1897, reprinted in van den Berg, *Uit de dagen der Compagnie: Geschiedkundige schetsen*, Haarlem, 1904, pp. 64–94. Struijs's account is entitled *Drie aanmerkelijke en zeer rampspoedige Reijzen door Italien, Griekenlandt, Lijflandt, Moscouien, Tartarijen, Meden, Persien, Oast-Indien, Japan en verscheijden andere gewesten*, Amsterdam, 1686. The episode of the Genoa Company is dealt with in the first section of the book.

98 *ANTT*, DRI, Livro. 58, fls. 16, 17, 39, 41, 42, 53, and 55–6. I have relied in particular on the 'Relação sobre as duas naos Genovesas q̃ chegarão aos Mares do sul este anno de 649', fls. 55–6. But also see the correspondence between the Hague and Lisbon, collected in Edgar Prestage and Pedro de Azevedo, eds., *Correspondência Diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho durante a sua embaixada em Holanda*, Volume II (1647–8), Coimbra, 1926.

avowed purpose to 'open navigation and traffic in merchandise in the East Indies, in particular in Japan, its vicinity, and in other free and practicable places'.[99] However, Japan does not seem really to have figured in the minds of the participants in the first venture, whose eyes were directed instead to the Indian west coast, to Indonesia, and to Portuguese Macao. The Dutch participants – the Meulman brothers and their associate, a certain Jakob van den Heuvel – must have been aware of the fact that, by 1647, Japan was neither 'free nor practicable' for their trade. Even if they did not, it is more than likely that the personnel they hired did so. These included a certain Jan Maas van Duijnkerken, who was to command the expedition, and had earlier sailed Asian waters in the employ of the VOC; besides, there was Jan Benning van Weesp, his deputy, and two persons designated the captains of the vessels of the Genoa Company – Hendrik Christiaensz van Amsterdam, and Harmen Voogd van Schiedam.[100]

We have already noted that Willem Meulman had taken upon himself the task of having the ships constructed at Texel. The two vessels, later named *San Giovanni Battista* and *San Bernardo*, were each of around 200 lasts burthen; *San Giovanni*, the larger of the two, carried twenty-eight guns, and *San Bernardo* twenty-six.[101] Even before these ships were made ready to sail from Texel to Genoa however, the secret was out. Surprisingly, it was not the Dutch who got wind of the matter but the Portuguese. Already in April 1647, Francisco de Sousa Coutinho, Portuguese ambassador at the Hague, had been apprised by Lisbon of the Genoese venture. At first, the Portuguese were uncertain whether the expedition was being mounted with the connivance of the VOC, but over a period of time concluded that the *Heren XVII* were themselves completely in the dark. By early July 1647, Coutinho had conferred with the VOC's Directors: these gentlemen were, he later reported, 'amazed, because they knew nothing of it, as it had been done very secretly; they thanked me and said that we might rest assured that they would strive to undo the voyage and would also advise us of what would be required either from them or from us to prevent such investigation'.[102]

99 Costantini, *Genova*, p. 347. '. . . aprire navigatione et trafico di mercantie nelle Indie Orientali, in particolare nel Giappone, suoi vicini et altri luoghi liberi et praticabili'.

100 Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua', p. 69 ff; *ANTT*, DRI, Livro. 58, fls. 55–5v.

101 Struijs, *Drie aanmerkelijke Reijzen*, pp. 2–3.

102 Letter from Francisco de Sousa Coutinho to D. João IV, *ANTT*, DRI, Livro. 58, fl. 17; also see Coutinho's letters to the Marquês de Niza dated 8 April, 24 June,

Surprising though it may seem then, the Portuguese and the Dutch, still in the process of enforcing an uneasy truce in Asia and in a state of war in parts of Brazil, *both* perceived a mutuality of interests in keeping others out of the commerce on the Cape route. On 20 September 1647, D. João IV, King of Portugal, wrote to his viceroy at Goa: 'You should be aware of the intent that some merchants from Genoa have of sending ships to that *Estado*. I commend you strongly, that with the attention that this affair requires, you give the necessary orders, so that by all possible means which present themselves to you, you impede this navigation and commerce'.[103] Scarcely two weeks later, the *Heren XVII* at Amsterdam despatched a letter to the Governor-General at Batavia, Cornelis van der Lijn, with the 'express charge, order and responsibility' to ensure that the monopoly rights of the Dutch in Indonesia and other parts of Asia be protected against the Genoese.[104]

The Dutch legal position was simple. First, it was argued, the States-General of the Netherlands had by a decree of 1632 forbidden any person from the United Provinces to seek employ with another Company in Asia, the more so if he had earlier been an employee of the VOC. And secondly, the 'exclusive treaties' they had signed with rulers in various parts of Indonesia were seen by the Dutch as legally binding on other parties and nations as well. As for the Portuguese, despite their long-standing ties with Genoa, and despite the fact that by 1647 they had no more than a marginal share of traffic on the Cape route, their instinctive reactions were still as they might have been a century earlier. This combination of reactions was quite clearly one foreseen neither by the Genoese investors, nor by their Dutch employees. It is possible, as Claudio Costantini puts it, that the considerable and active Dutch presence in Genoa had resulted in a miscalculation on the part of the Genoese;[105] besides, there had in the past been Dutchmen employed by other Companies, and the VOC had done precious little about it. As for the Portuguese factor, this seems to have been wholly unforeseen – and even modern-day historians of Genoa have not perceived the existence of a Portuguese hand in what followed.

and 8 July 1647, published in Prestage and Azevedo, eds., *Correspondência Diplomática*, pp. 81, 142 and 151.

103 *ANTT*, DRI, Livro. 58, fl. 16, '... vos será presente o intento que alguns Mercadores de Genova tem de imviarem embarcaçöes a esse Estado...'.

104 Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua', p. 65; also see W.Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, II, pp. 341, 349.

105 Costantini, *Genova*, p. 317. 'La fiducia riposta nell' amicizia olandese fu mal ripagata ...' etc.

To proceed with the history of the expedition, the two ships arrived in Genoa late in February 1648, having set sail from Texel just after Christmas.[106] It was decided that, while the bulk of the crew would be Dutch, some Genoese 'noblemen' (or patricians) would be sent on board, both to ensure that the Dutch captains and merchants maintained financial order, and to permit the next expedition to be made without Dutch assistance – if the necessity arose. The Italian sources suggest that the number of these Genoese was five, but later documents in the Dutch archives mention only four: Paolo Emilio Invrea, Giovanni Battista Fieschi, Stefano Centurione and Pietro Maria de' Marchesi.[107] These persons carried letters of exchange worth 312,000 rials of eight, besides which there was the cargo loaded on the ships – the value of which is not specified in the documentation.

Before the ships left Genoa on 3 March 1648, several rather special agreements were signed between those on board the vessels and the financiers of the venture. One of these agreements, published by Danilo Presotto, is a 'Contratto di Arruolamento' (or enlistment contract) specifying the terms and conditions under which the mariners were to serve.[108] This included such clauses as one forbidding private trade or the carriage of freight goods aboard the ships, others concerning the distribution of food and wine, actions in case of fire, the dispensation of justice on board, and a final one forbidding all officials and mariners from 'insulting, using force, or insolence, or stealing or assaulting' any Indian, except on the express orders of the Captain or the Director (the last being Jan Maas). One of the most significant clauses in the agreement is the twenty-seventh, which promises to compensate at fixed rates those on board the vessels for any injury sustained while defending the ships. The rates are as follows: 800 *fiorini* for loss of the right arm, 500 *fiorini* for the left, 300 *fiorini* for either eye but 900 *fiorini* for the loss of both, 600 *fiorini* for the right hand, 400 for the left, and so on. This section of the agreement underlines once again, in the plainest terms, the

[106] The dates in Struijs's journal are problematic and of varying accuracy, steadily becoming more erratic as he proceeds farther from Europe. However, one presumes the date of departure from Texel is at least accurate, as it does not contradict other evidence.

[107] Some of these identifications are speculative, as the Dutch have rendered Latin versions of the names, which are as follows: Johannes Baptista Fliscus, Stephanus Contevonus (or sometimes Cenonomis), Petrus Maria de Marchis, and Paulus Aemilius de Inuren. For the mention of *five* Genoese, see Presotto, 'Da Genova alle Indie', p. 75.

[108] Presotto, 'Da Genova', pp. 86–91.

inseparability in the seventeenth century European mind, of trade and violence, especially in the Asian context.

A second agreement, mentioned neither in the Dutch nor in the Italian documents, but described in an anonymous account written by a Genoese merchant at Goa, was between the *direttore* Jan Maas and the *vice-direttore* Jan Benning, and their principals.[109] This agreement guaranteed the two Dutchmen a fifth part of the profits of their voyage as recompense for the expertise they brought with them, suggesting a startling parallel with the voyage of Pieter Willemsz and Lucas Anthonisz on the English *Globe* three decades earlier.

The ships set sail from Genoa then in early March, and proceeded to Alicante and Malaga, where they remained until mid-April.[110] Then, proceeding through the Straits of Gibraltar, they made their way past the Cape Verde Islands to Sierra Leone, where they put in for provisions. The journal of the sailmaker Struijs suggests that there was trouble at Sierra Leone, when a quarrel between Jan Maas and a local chief resulted in an attack on some coastal villages.[111] The ships seem to have emerged unscathed though, and in early July the expedition set off from Sierra Leone for the Cape of Good Hope, and arrived at Madagascar (in the Bay of António Gil) in September 1648. Here they were to remain for several months, awaiting a favourable monsoon. The winter spent by the Genoese fleet of two at Madagascar (or the Ilha de São Lourenço as it was better known in the epoch) was an eventful one. In the course of it, Jan Benning, *vice-direttore* of the expedition died, and there followed a quarrel between those who wanted to raise Harmen Voogd to this post,and others who favoured Hendrik Christiaesz.[112] Jan Maas seems to have been inclined to support the latter, so that a near-mutiny resulted on the *San Bernardo* (of which Voogd was the captain). However, the Genoese on board the fleet, who were finding to their increasing dismay that the terms of the agreements signed at Genoa gave them little decision-making power in comparison to Maas, interceded and

[109] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 58, fl. 55v. 'E assy armadas as duas Naos e providas de Genova, os ditos homens piloto mor e superintendente pedirão por partido ao Magistrado Genovez da nova Companhia por satisfação de seus serviços e pagas e merecimentos a quinta parte de todos os intereces, no que o Magistrado veo...'.

[110] Anonymous letter from Genoa to D. João IV, dated 4 March 1648, *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 58, fl. 42; the author of this letter was in all probability a certain 'Judice' Fieschi, on whom see Prestage and Azevedo, eds., *Correspondência Diplomática*, Volume II, p. 304.

[111] Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua', pp. 71–2.

[112] *Ibid.*, pp. 73–4; also pp. 89–94, 'Remonstrantie ende Verzoek van Harman Vooght'. Finally, see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 58, fls. 55–6, 'Relação sobre as duas Naos genovesas'.

the situation was temporarily defused. Voogd was invited to parley on board the *San Giovanni*, but, as soon as he arrived, Jan Maas had him placed in irons – where he remained for several months.[113]

This matter having been settled, and the crew reconciled to it,the ships prepared to sail in early 1649. Neither the Dutch nor the Italian documents are clear on what exactly the intentions of Jan Maas were. It was believed in Lisbon (on the basis of information provided by a Genoese patrician, himself of the Fieschi family, who corresponded with D. João IV) that the purpose of the ships was to sail eventually to Macao and Manila.[114] On the other hand, the other anonymous Genoese, to whose account we have referred earlier, is quite explicit in stating that the first destination was Goa.[115] It was only on account of 'contrary winds', he asserts, that the ships found themselves in March 1649 – some three months after they had left the Bahia de António Gil – on the west coast of Sumatra. There is a certain plausibility to this. First, the same had occurred on more than one occasion to Portuguse vessels sailing from Lisbon to Goa in the sixteenth century. Secondly, we have seen that the Genoese were unaware of the hostile sentiments harboured by the Portuguese Crown towards their venture. And thirdly, if (as is agreed by all sources) Macao formed part of their proposed itinerary, it is not unreasonable that Portuguese Goa should have constituted the first port of call of the Genoese. At least one other 'interloper' of the period, the English Captain John Weddell, had proceeded in almost exactly the same fashion.

In fact, although they were unaware of it, Weddell's ghost dogged the Genoese. As the leader of an expedition for the short-lived Courteen's Association of the 1630s and 1640s Weddell had earned something of an unsavory reputation in the Indian Ocean, attacking Asian shipping, incurring debts that remained unpaid, and even on occasion passing counterfeit rials of eight.[116] When the two Genoese

[113] *Ibid.* The Portuguese version describes it thus: '... e assy lhes persuadirão q̃ se viesse com elles a Nao São João aonde o trouxerão, e o capitão tanto que vio ao borão o prendeo logo em ferros E se puzerão as couzas em ordem castigando aos de parcealidade do prezo, e continuarão a viagem'.

[114] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 58, fl. 41, letter from D. João IV to D. Felipe Mascarenhas, dated 21 April 1648. '... hirem estes navios tomar a carga a Malega parece q̃ ajuda a presunção de Machao e Manilha'.

[115] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 58, fl. 55v. '... e continuarão a viagem, com detreminação de virem aportar em Goa. Mas em rezão de ventos contrarios aribarão sobre a Java (*sic*) e tomarão o porto de Tico ...'.

[116] On Weddell, see the travel account of Peter Mundy, who was on his fleet, i.e. R.C. Temple, ed., *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1637*, Volume III, Part 1; Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade*, pp. 69–70.

ships arrived at the port of Tiku on the Sumatran west coast, they seem to have been mistaken for Courteenians. According to our anonymous Genoese reporter, Jan Maas went ashore at this port with the intention of buying pepper to carry to Macao, and in fact arrived at an agreement with the local *pangeran* and *shahbandar*. But, the account continues, 'some ships of the Malays impeded them in their commerce, denouncing them to the Governor of the land, and saying that they were English, for their flags showed it, and that they had been found to carry false coins.'[117] The sins of the Courteenians at Bandar Aceh having been visited on him, Jan Maas retaliated. He swiftly captured some Malay craft in the harbour, and forcibly took pepper off them; though advised by other members of his council to pay the Malays for what was taken, Maas (who was known for his choleric temper) refused to do so.

According to Struijs's journal, however, this was not the first such act of the fleet. His account contains a picaresque description of the earlier capture of an Acehnese vessel, the crew and passengers of which were (he recounts) all thrown overboard, save for one woman – who, he claims, was 'mishandled and ravished' by the Genoese patricians, and finally sent ashore, where she was 'krissed' (viz. killed with a *kris*) by her husband for her misfortunes.[118] Struijs does not strike one, though, as the most trustworthy of witnesses. For instance, in the particular incident referred to above, it is not clear how he could have come to know what happened to the woman once she went ashore. All the documents agree however, that the incident at Tiku proved the undoing of Maas and the expedition. One of the Malay *nakhudas* who had been present at the port arrived in Batavia on 26 March 1649, and complained to the Dutch of Maas's doings. He reported too that the ships were, at that point, in the Sumatran port of Salida, 'trying their best to enter into the pepper trade with the inhabitants of that and neighbouring places.'[119]

Governor-General van der Lijn and his Council had, we have already seen, been apprised of the impending arrival of these ships in Asian waters by a letter from the *Heren XVII* of October 1647. Bearing in mind the strong tone of that letter, it was decided to take immediate action. Two fleets, each of four ships, were sent out; the

117 *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 58, fl. 56, ' ... e feita ja avença com o Governador da dita terra, alguas embarcaçóes de Malayos lhes impidirão o comercio acuzando os ao Governador da terra dizendo que elles herão Inglezes pois o mostravão as bandeiras, e se achavão q̃ trazião patacas falços ...'. On this incident, also see Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, II, p. 463.

118 Struijs, *Drie aanmerkelijke Reijzen*, pp. 24–5.

119 Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische-Compagnie', p. 64.

one was to scour the Sumatran west coast, and the other was to block the Sunda Straits passage.[120] In the event, the capture proved no problem. The Genoese on their pepper-procurement trail left Salida for Sunda in mid-April. When they fell into the arms of the Dutch fleet, there was not even a show of resistance, possibly because (if one is to credit Struijs) the incidents at Madagascar had divided the fleet so sharply that Maas's authority had been greatly eroded.[121] The Dutch fleet returned to Batavia with its two prizes on 26 April 1649, exactly a month after the first reports of the Genoese presence had been received.

Once in Batavia, the situation grew daily more bizarre. Harmen Voogd gave vent to his accumulated grievances in a long 'Remonstrantie ende verzoek' to Governor-General van der Lijn, accusing Jan Maas of every conceivable mischief, which he concluded with the request that his goods be taken off the ships and brought on land, and that he be employed by the VOC.[122] Besides, Maas and Hendrik Christiaensz fell out too, the latter accusing the former in a letter of 15 June (addressed to the Dutch Council of the Indies) of having illegally unloaded goods from the ships, and traded in them for his own profit.[123] In turn, a month later, the Genoese Giovanni Battista Fieschi, in a petition of his own, accused Christiaensz of engaging in precisely the activities that he attributed to Maas. Also, the four Genoese patricians in a collective petition requested that they be allowed to return to Genoa together with Jan Maas, Voogd, and Christiaensz, and that their goods be restituted to them.[124] The *Raden van Indië* were not inclined to look kindly on this last request. In a meeting of 19th July, they asserted that the use of a Dutch crew and merchants by the Genoese was against the laws of the United Provinces, and refused to restitute the goods of the Genoese, or even the letter of credit of 312,000 rials which had been taken from them. Not content with this, the VOC set about selling the two ships,

[120] *Ibid.*, pp. 64–7.
[121] Cf. Struijs, *Drie aanmerkelijke Reijzen*, p. 25.
[122] 'Remonstrantie ende verzoek van Harman Vooght, gewesene schipper op den schepe genaemt St. Barnardo, overgegeven bij denselvigen aen den Edn. gestrengen, de Heer Cornelis van der Lijn, Gouverneur Generalissimo van India Orientae, ende sijne bijwesende mede Raden', Resolutieboek van het Cateel Batavia, 17 May 1649, reproduced in Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua', pp. 89–94.
[123] Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua', p. 79.
[124] Petition from Joannes Baptista Fliscus to the Governor-General and Council, dated 13 July 1649; another petition from Fliscus, Contevonus, Marchis and Inuren, dated 29 June 1649, reproduced in van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van genua' pp. 80ff, 81–3.

selling the *San Bernardo* for 6,100 rials in late 1649, and the *San Giovanni Battista* somewhat later for 9,000 rials.[125]

News of the unhappy end of the expedition reached Genoa only in December 1650, and pressure was immediately applied on the Dutch through diplomatic channels, in order to secure the restitution of the goods and money. It does not seem that the pressures that were brought to bear were wholly successful, though the four Genoese did apparently manage to return eventually to Europe on Dutch ships.[126] Many of the Dutch mariners who had served on board the Genoese ships succeeded, for their part, in gaining employment in Asia with the VOC; Struijs himself was employed by early 1650 as a sailmaker on the Dutch ship *Zwarte Beer.*[127] It was on the shoulders of the *direttore* Jan Maas that the Genoese placed the blame for the debacle. The anonymous Goa-based Genoese merchant writes in 1650, 'In all this, the culprit is the said João Massa, because he always worked against the instruction of the Genoese Magistrate, treated the fidalgos whom he brought with him very badly, giving them little to eat and depriving them of all services, and reducing them to a worse state than grummets, making himself the absolute master, robbing against the orders he had been given at Genoa, and thus the said João Massa was a traitor to them...'. He goes on to lament 'the damage that has been suffered by the Genoese nation in terms of goods and honour on account of João Massa, giving occasion that they may in India be known as corsairs and pirates'.[128] But Maas did not live long enough to account for his deeds, dying in Batavia in early 1650 at the hands of an unknown assassin.[129]

In Genoa, ideas of participating in the India trade were abandoned only temporarily, for the capital of the *Compagnia Genovese delle Indie Orientali* was soon transferred in large measure to form another company, the *Compagnia Marittima di San Giorgio.* Some ships that the East India Company had under construction in Texel were diverted to this end, the basic purpose of the new Company being to

125 Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua' pp. 86–7; also, Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, II, pp. 395–6, 431, 598, 624 and 659–60.

126 ANTT, DRI, Livro 58, fl. 56; Costantini, *La Repubblica di Genova*, p. 318. In the homeward bound Dutch fleet of winter 1649–50, 39,341 rials worth of bills of exchange were sent back on account of the Genoese, but it is evident that the four patricians did not themselves travel aboard this fleet; cf. Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, II, pp. 396, 399.

127 Struijs, *Drie aanmerkelijke Reijzen*, p. 26.

128 *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 58, fl. 56. 'No que tudo he culpado o dito João Massa pois sempre obrou contra o Regimento do Magistrado Genoves, tratando muito mal aos fidalgos q̃ consigo trazia...' etc.

129 Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua', p. 88.

participate under license in Portuguese overseas ventures.[130] Thus, the Genoese, unaware of the role played by the Portuguese in scuttling their East India expedition, decided to send some ships in the late 1650s in the Portuguese convoys to Brazil. But this venture too soon folded up.[131]

Conclusion

The brief and somewhat unhappy career of the Genoese East India Company is instructive in various ways. For historians of Genoa like Claudio Costantini, it forms an episode in the process that he terms 'the rediscovery of the sea' (*la riscoperta del mare*) by that city in the second quarter of the seventeenth century.[132] To other historians such as N.P. van den Berg, writing in the last century, the history of the Genoese Company is symptomatic of the degeneration (in a moral sense) of southern Europe, besides being a reaffirmation of the values that created the VOC.[133] This characteristically Whiggish approach has major problems inherent in it, which are however of too obvious and general a nature to require much elaboration here. From our viewpoint, the episode is instructive for two reasons. First, it shows those arch-rivals, the Dutch and the Portuguese, united for a brief historical moment by a common 'dog-in-the-manger' attitude, and thereby also indicates that the two nations did in some important respects share a perspective on monopolies and the use of force in long-distance trade. The second point is a more complex one. The basic legal justification that the Dutch used to confiscate the Genoese vessels was that they carried Dutch crews and merchants. This was based on the application of a *Plakkaat* of 1606, renewed in 1632, and laid down by the States-General. The point to be stressed in the present context is that this legislation was *selectively* applied by the Dutch, depending on the concrete political circumstances.

When Pieter Willemszoon 'Floris' and Lucas Anthonisz participated integrally in the Seventh Voyage of the English Company

130 Costantini, *La Repubblica di Genova*, pp. 319–21.

131 *Ibid.*, pp. 320–1; also see the brief comment in C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil, 1624–1654*, Oxford, 1957, p. 207.

132 Costantini, *La Repubblica di Genova*, Chapters X, XVII and XVIII.

133 Van den Berg, 'De Oost-Indische Compagnie van Genua', pp. 75–6, *passim*. A typically judgemental passage runs: 'Zoo werd derhalve ook de les van den apostel om niet in brasserijen en dronkenschappen te wandelen door de officieren van de *Heilige Bernard* en de *Heilige Johannes de Dooper* op treurige wijze in den wind geslagen ...'. Given the notorious devotion of VOC employees in Asia to Bacchus and Venus, it seems somewhat unfair to see all this as characteristic solely of a Genoese 'roofpartij'.

between 1611 and 1615, the Dutch did not attempt recourse to confiscation. Equally, the instigation for the Ceylonese adventure of the Danish Company was provided by a former VOC employee, Marcelis Michielsz de Boschouwer; later (as we have seen) the Danes numbered among their staff numerous Dutchmen, including a certain Christoffel van der Molen, and had as their Presidents Roland Crappé and Bernt Pessart, both Dutchmen, In all these cases of Dutchmen, some of them even former VOC employees, the *Plakkaat* of 1606 (and 1632) was not invoked. Thus, it is not the legality of the Dutch position in 1649–50 which is so central as the realpolitik that informed it. In reality, the Dutch had two choices. They could shrug off the gadfly Company, and wait for it to fold up for economic reasons, even as the first Danish Company was perilously close to doing in those very years, or they could resort to the use of force. If, as Niels Steensgaard has argued, 'their success was not based upon government monopolies or the use of violence, but on their ability to compete in the market', the Dutch over-reacted. The consistent pattern of such 'over-reactions', in Asia and in Europe, does suggest however that Steensgaard greatly understates the importance of violence in determining the success of the VOC. This was realised, sadly, after the event, by Genoese such as Giovanni Battista Pallavicini, who wrote in 1653 of 'the jealousy and envy of the Flemings in fearing that others would involve themselves in that trade, by the exercise of which they [the Dutch] have transformed themselves from the inhabitants of a few marshes to the most powerful people in Europe'.[134] For, he concluded, the Dutch believed that if the Genoese entered trade on the Cape Route, soon the other powers which in the mid seventeenth century sailed solely within the Mediterranean might show an interest – a possibility which the Dutch did not wish to contemplate.

It appears in the final analysis then, that neither the *Heren XVII* nor the Governor-General at Batavia shared the confidence of modern-day historians in their Company's ability to compete without the use of violence. Moreover, habituated as they were to taking

[134] *Archivio di Stato*, Genoa, Archivio Segreto, Lettere ministri, 2185, dated 19 December 1653, cited in Costantini, *Genova*, pp. 318–19. The correspondence of Francisco de Sousa Coutinho also makes it amply clear that the Dutch and the Portuguese were determined to stop the Genoese, whatever the legal position might be. Thus, he writes, '... o de que estou certo he que se os da Companhia os colherem nos mares da Índia, que os hão de confiscar, fação os nossos o mesmo se os encontrarem, *seja onde fôr* ...' (emphasis added). Cf. Prestage and Azevedo, eds., *Correspondência Diplomática*, Volume II, p. 304, letter dated 3 February 1648.

resort to force, whether in respect of those Asians whom they perceived as obstacles, or their own European rivals, the Dutch – like the English and Portuguese–do not appear to have seen violence as anything but an integral part of their lives. In the context of cultures which they perceived as strange, peoples for whom they had religious or racial disdain (and who equally might have disdain for them), the limit to conflict was set largely by the costs it might entail. Peter Marshall has argued persuasively that, while the potential capacity for Europeans to consistently use force more efficiently than Asians may have existed since the mid seventeenth century, it was only in the early nineteenth century that this potential could be realised in maritime Asia. In the period with which we are concerned, he notes 'the inevitability of ultimate European military success...is questionable'.[135] Like all counterfactual propositions, this one too may be debated at length, but it is important to note that this *balance of terror* (if one may use an anachronistic term) was certainly believed in by contemporary Europeans.[136] This, if nothing else, served to contain the conflict and mitigate it. This was not done however, without numerous trials of strength, mutual probings for chinks in the armour, and repeated localised conflicts. In this lies the essence of this age.

[135] Peter J. Marshall, 'Western arms in maritime Asia in the early phases of expansion', *Modern Asian Studies,* Volume XIV, (1), 1980, pp. 13–28.

[136] Cf. I. Bruce Watson, 'Fortifications and the "Idea" of force in early East India Company relations with India', *Past and Present*, no. 88, 1980, pp. 70–87. Watson cites, among others, Sir Thomas Roe: 'Anything that would stir these people to know us and fear us will work better effects than all the fair ways in the world' (p. 75).

6

External commerce and political participation

Introduction

One of the major themes to be encountered in the historiography on pre-colonial trade in India is of the relationship between Asian traders, on the one hand, and the political structures of Asia, on the other. In part, this question has been addressed in the preceding chapter, for the delicate balance between Europeans and Asians, centering above all on the question of seapower, is intimately related to how Asian political structures viewed external trade. In the present chapter, however, the question of the interface between external commerce and political participation will be addressed far more directly, and it will be argued that there existed a set of persons whom we will term 'portfolio capitalists', occupying in the early seventeenth century the middle ground between the worlds of mercantile capitalism and political capitalism.

This view should be counterposed, properly speaking, to the dominant stream of thinking on this question. Numerous writers, including Michael Pearson, K.N. Chaudhuri, and most recently S. Arasaratnam, have addressed this issue for different parts of India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Pearson, whose argument was initially developed in the context of Gujarat, has since extended it to embrace much of the rest of India. He develops a picture of a society comprised of functionally defined cells in a beehive (closely identified by him with a somewhat rigid conception of caste), wherein one has a 'militarily oriented elite', whose 'culturally sanctioned activities were land activities', and were counterposed to the activities of 'merchants'. Pearson then goes on to argue that

> all this applies equally well to the southern states. In Deccan, the Muslim political elite was preoccupied during the [sixteenth] century with establishing independent states after the Bahmani disintegration late in the previous century, then with struggles between themselves and with Hindu Vijayanagar further south, and after 1565 and the end of Vijayanagar with

expanding over its ruins. In none of these elite preoccupations did maritime affairs play any role at all.[1]

K.N. Chaudhuri, in his recent writings on the Indian Ocean, seems to favour a similar view. We find the repeated use of 'merchants' as a well-defined category, distinguished from other categories such as 'princes or aristocracy', 'government', 'bureaucratic officials', 'hereditary landowners', and the like. In Chaudhuri's view, 'In general, the supply and ownership of capital employed in the long-distance trade of the Indian Ocean remained in the hands of professional merchants', who 'had no direct access to political or military power'. Moreover, he notes, 'the whole weight of social, legal and political traditions in Asia remained tilted, whether by accident or by deliberate preference, towards keeping the merchants as capitalists separate from other groups in society'. Finally, and in a somewhat Orientalistic vein, he concludes that 'the spectre of arbitrary expropriation was never far off from the scene of pre-modern commerce. The vulnerability of merchants to unpredictable shifts in official policy furnished the greatest threat to the continuity of Asian business houses and their uncontrolled growth'.[2]

These views, dominant as they are, are often used to support the contention that European enclaves such as Madras or Bombay grew in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, precisely because they – by providing the umbrella of a *European* legal structure – gave to Asian merchants the protection they did not enjoy from Oriental Despots. However, an implicit attempt to challenge them exists in recent work, particularly that of H.W. van Santen and S. Arasaratnam. While van Santen has criticised Pearson's view of the disjunction between merchants and state in Gujarat, Arasaratnam notes in the first half of the seventeenth century, the existence in south-eastern India of what he terms 'political merchants', who 'utilized their political positions to further their commercial interests', as well as of other influential merchants who systematically combined commercial operations with political influence.[3] In the

1 See M.N. Pearson, 'India and the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century', in Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, pp. 71–93, especially p. 79. These views were earlier articulated in Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*; but also see Ashin Das Gupta, 'The maritime merchant, c. 1500 to 1800', Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, 1974, as well as Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, 1700–1750*.

2 K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, pp. 209, 211–12.

3 For a critique of Pearson, see H.W. van Santen, 'De VOC in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620–1660', pp. 51–8. Also see S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast*, p. 224

sections that follow, we shall attempt to further develop this critique, using as case studies the careers of certain prominent operators in the world of south-eastern India in the early seventeenth century. Further, a contrast will be developed between this situation and that to be encountered in south-western India in the period. Finally, the role of these 'portfolio capitalists' will explicitly be linked to the larger social, political and economic processes of the period under consideration. This is in contrast to more static and 'structural' formulations, such as that of Arasaratnam, who has argued that 'in the first half of the seventeenth century, there was the continuance of a relationship [between trade and politics] that must basically have existed under the great South Indian kingdoms of the preceding six or seven centuries'.[4]

The career of Achyutappa Chetti

In a powerful critique of what he terms the 'functionalist method' in the study of the pre-colonial Indian state, Frank Perlin notes that such an approach, inherent for example in Pearson's writings on the relationship between trade and politics 'is... an argument against the very possibility of change occurring in old-order societies'. The overwhelming emphasis on function and role, rather then *career* is seen as crucial: thus, Perlin argues, many apparently distinct types should be seen 'as... categories inhabited by persons with careers affecting the history of the state', rather than congruent with persons themselves. He goes on to argue that 'such careers derived primarily from their involvement in a complex and changing society, persons possessing accumulations of various kinds of right and wealth, and engaged in activities transcending mere "official" categories'.[5]

Although formulated largely with the eighteenth century in mind, Perlin's conception is to a large extent appropriate in the context of seventeenth century southern India, both the territory designated as the Sultanate of Golconda, and that under the rule of Nayaka rulers, and the Chandragiri *raja*. Here, as we have seen, the Dutch and English Companies entered into trade in the early years of the seventeenth century, and have left behind a considerable corpus of evidence on the local context. Of particular importance is the Dutch

[4] Cf. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, p. 222. For a critique, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Asian trade and European affluence? Coromandel, 1650–1740', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XXII (1), 1988.

[5] Frank Perlin, 'State formation reconsidered', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XIX (3), 1985, pp. 421–3.

evidence, given its relative detail. Having made Pulicat their central and head factory on Coromandel by 1612, the Dutch drew brokers and merchants operating in various parts of central and southern Coromandel to the port. Their attempt to operate in the territories of the Nayakas of Senji and Tanjavur had met early difficulties. The factory settled at Tirupapuliyur was precariously placed on account of hostile relations with the *dalavay* of Senji, Tiruvengalaiya, referred to by the Dutch as the 'Great Aya', or more curiously as the *capado* (Port. eunuch], though whether this was fact or mere vituperation is unclear.[6] It was while operating in Senji territory that the Dutch first made contact with the person with whom this section extensively concerns itself, Achyutappa Chetti.

As early as 1608, Achyutappa (or 'Maleyo' as he is more frequently referred to by the Dutch) was apparently engaged by Jacob de Bitter as an interpreter in the Senji area, while negotiating with the *dalavay* and Nayaka for a factory site.[7] During the decade 1610–20, we come across no more than a few references to him, principally as a minor creditor or debtor of the VOC. It would appear though that in this decade he had not as yet completely identified himself with the VOC. This is evident for instance from the feelers he sent out to the English factors based at Pulicat for a brief period in the decade (during the short lived Anglo-Dutch Treaty of Defence), telling them that he and his brother – who was based at Devanampattinam – were prepared to supply the English in place of the Dutch with textiles.[8]

By the decade 1620–30 however, and until his death in 1634, Achyutappa moved ever closer to the VOC, operating as their agent in various spheres – both commercial and political. We have already noted that, as early as 1615, the Company was facing difficulties with their Tirupapuliyur factory. Thus, for a good part of the first half of the seventeenth century, direct access to the Coromandel markets and production centres south of Pulicat was rather limited. The VOC either traded there on an itinerant basis, or had short-lived and

[6] For references to 'the Great Aya', see Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605–1690*, pp. 19–20, *passim*; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 189–91; VOC. 1062, fls. 41-v; VOC. 1086, fls. 162-v, *passim*.

[7] Joseph J. Brennig, 'Chief merchants and the European enclaves of 17th century Coromandel', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XI, No. 3, 1977, pp. 321–40, especially p. 323; also see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1059, fls. 49v–50v. Also *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fl. 206, 'Insonderheyt met Malaya den tolc, die een man van vermogen is...'.

[8] On the Treaty of Defence, see *inter alia* Om Prakash, ed., *The Dutch Factories in India*, pp. 12–14; the relations between Achyutappa 'Malaya' and the English Company in this period are documented in *EFI [1622–23]*, p. 119 (Pulicat to Batavia, 9th September 1622), pp. 138–141 (Pulicat to Batavia, 6 November 1622) and p. 238 (Pulicat to Masulipatnam, June 1623).

somewhat insecure factories there. Southern Coromandel was however rather important in their commercial network, since the Dutch required from the area not merely the textiles of the Kaveri delta and the Cuddalore region, but the indigo grown around Devanampattinam, and the saltpeter which came overland from Madurai. In addition, for brief periods of time in the 1620s and 1630s, the pepper trade overland from Malabar showed unusual levels of activity, so that pepper was to be had in Porto Novo and Tarangambadi, among other ports.[9] Finally, in years of crisis or shortage, when the regular coastal trade network broke down or proved inadequate, the Kaveri delta could be tapped as a source of rice to provision Company factories.[10] In all this, the VOC was until 1634 almost completely dependent on Achyutappa, and thereafter on his brother Chinanna and other relatives.

It is possible on the basis of the Dutch and English records (as well as some letters of the Portuguese at Goa and Coromandel) to trace the different phases of Achyutappa's career.[11] Initially no more than a broker and interpreter, by around 1620, his power as an independent merchant was on the rise, as was his standing in the elite politics of southern and central Coromandel. In the internecine warfare of the 1620s, with problems created by *palaiyakkarar* factions in the Senji and Chingleput regions, he succeeded in manoeuvring himself into a quasi-diplomatic position, mediating between the factions, as well as establishing his own credibility in the court at Chandragiri. It is around this time that the first references occur as well to his own shipping interests, based largely at Pulicat and to a lesser extent at Devanampattinam. These ships he used to trade with Sri Lanka, Arakan, Pegu and the Malay Peninsula ports. Further, he came to acquire an important role as well in the trade with Mergui – which was in a sense a trade with Ayutthaya, given that a high proportion of the textiles were carried upriver from Mergui to Tenasserim and thence to Patani or Ayutthaya.[12] In a single year,

[9] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1082, fls. 56-v; *EFI [1624–29]*, pp. 4–6.

[10] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1117, fl. 682, *passim*.

[11] The earliest references to Achyutappa in the historiography occur in W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 156–8, where he is termed Malaya, as distinct from his brother Chinanna. See also Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', pp. 323–33; and Brennig, 'The textile trade of seventeenth-century northern Coromandel', Chapter II for the best recent discussion. Finally, there is also a brief discussion in Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, pp. 222–4, but this adds little to Brennig, save some errors of fact.

[12] On the Mergui-Tenasserim complex, see Andrew Forbes, 'Tenasserim: The Thai Kingdom of Ayutthaya's link with the Indian Ocean', *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, June 1982, Volume III, No. 1 pp. 1–3; also George Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand*, p. 11.

1632, we hear of shipping owned by him, and by his brother Chinanna, trading on at least five distinct routes in the Bay of Bengal. Up to a certain point this was seen as advantageous by the Dutch Company as well, who observed the existence of certain side-benefits for themselves. For example, they made use of Achyutappa's factor at Pegu to further their own early trade there.[13] Besides, the quasi-diplomatic status of Achyutappa emerges from his relations with the King of Arakan, with the Nayaka of Madurai and even the Cochin ruler, who used the merchant as an intermediary to attempt a *rapprochement* with the Dutch early in the 1630s. His request for a certain number of *cartazes* from the VOC, permitting merchants based at Cochin to navigate to Aceh was however turned down.[14]

This survey by no means exhausts the range of Achyutappa's activities, daunting as these may seem. By the late 1620s, he together with his brother Chinanna was increasingly involved in farming revenue in the territory of the Nayakas and the Chandragiri ruler, largely confining himself to southern Andhra and northern Tamil Nadu. Joseph Brennig has noted his investment of 33,000 *pagodas* in the revenue-farm of Pulicat and surrounding areas,[15] and we have earlier references to his farming Porto Novo, Devanampattinam and Puducheri. Such activities were clearly not devoid of impact on his overseas trade and intermediary activities; the English for example complained bitterly that as revenue-farmer of a crucial area in central Coromandel, he blocked their access to weaving villages, and attempted the control of highways to their detriment.[16] However, the subordination of one set of activities to another is by no means patent in his case; if his position as trader and broker was affected by his revenue-farming and administrative dealings, there were clearly linkages flowing in the opposite direction as well. Conspicuous among these was his use of cannon and horses, borrowed, acquired without payment or bought from the VOC. These he used not only to gain favour with local militia leaders and the Nayakas, but to fortify and secure militarily his 'home-base' of Devanampattinam, where he had a small fortified house, visible from the sea.[17]

[13] On Achyutappa's Pegu trade, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 278v; Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', p. 325.

[14] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1105, fls. 186v-187; on the Portuguese reactions to the manoeuvres of the King Vira Keralavarma [1615–37], see António Bocarro, 'Livro das Plantas', Parte I, pp. 349–50.

[15] Brennig , 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', p. 325.

[16] *EFI [1624–29]*, p. 131, 136 especially p. 131 (Armagon to Masulipatnam, 13 May 1626).

[17] *EFI [1622–23]*, pp. 111, 141. See also *EFI [1624–29]* pp. 8–10 (instructions to George Cockram on entering the Nayaka of Tanjavur's territory, dated 27 March 1624), and pp. 13–14.

To understand the sum total of Achyutappa's activities and the events following on his death, it is of some importance to delineate the extended joint family context within which he functioned. Achyutappa, it is generally believed, belonged to the Balija Chetti mercantile community,[18] orginally of Telugu extraction, but settled in the Tamil region as part of the extensive migratory movement from the Andhra to the Tamil regions that began c. 1350 and continued into our period. The family tree of Achyutappa – to the extent that we are aware of it – was as follows:

Achytappa	Chinanna	Kesava	brother (unknown)	sister (unknown)
	↓	↓	↓	↓
	(unknown)	Laksmana	Koneri	Sesadra
			↓	
			Krishnappa	

In the period before 1634, Achyutappa operated principally through two agents – his brother Chinanna, and his nephew Sesadra. Of these, Chinanna – who was particularly powerful in the Devanampattinam region, and also far more immersed in the elite politics and diplomacy of the Nayaka kingdom – was relied upon most, that is, when something was required from the Cuddalore area, or when embassy or political negotiations were the order of the day. On the other hand, Sesadra – who himself is seen later to be a close counsellor of the Nayaka of Senji – in this period played the roles of textile procurer, intermediary merchant and mercantile understudy to Achyutappa.[19] Thus if one were to draw an imaginary line on the left of which one would find the *ideal type* 'merchant' and to the right the category 'politico', Chinanna would figure to Achyutappa's right, and Sesadra to his left. The crucial point is however that none of them would conform to either of the two ideal types. As early as 1625, we see Chinanna's participation in elite politics leading him into some difficulties: in a particular instance, he was forced to flee Devanampattinam for Kunjimedu, when the former place was attacked by Tiruvengalaiya, *dalavay* of Senji, who was jealous of Chinanna's attempt to build up a power base at Devanampattinam.[20] In the middle 1630s, almost immediately after the death of

[18] Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', p. 324.
[19] On Sesadra, see W.Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, I, p. 526; also *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fl. 1123, *passim*.
[20] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 205 (June 1625).

Achyutappa in March 1634, various rifts and rivalries appeared within the extended joint family. For one, Chinanna fell out with Kesava and his son Laksmana Nayaka, who had by the late 1630s established themselves as shipowning merchants of some prominence at Puducheri. Further, Sesadra and Chinanna fell out, largely on the question – it would appear – of a rivalry over the brokerage of the VOC. Sesadra eventually settled in Madras, and in the 1640s emerged as a major broker for the English Company, but in the interim, these two sets of factional rivalries caused not a little difficulty in the area.[21]

The first references of Achyutappa's own ships appear, as we have mentioned earlier, only in the 1620s. At least one of them was a yacht *Masulipatam*, purchased by him from the Dutch Company,[22] while another was a ship constructed at the Narsapurpettai dockyard, and sold him by Mir Kamaluddin Mazendarani (sometimes also termed Haji Jamal), based at Masulipatnam.[23] In the main, during the late 1620s and early 1630s, Achyutappa concentrated on the trade with Pegu (meaning Martaban, Tavoy and Siriam) but also traded in fair measure with Arakan and the Mergui-Tenasserim complex. Occasionally, his ships put in at Perak and Kedah, and, on the odd occasion, even Batavia, but this was rare. Finally, he partook of the coastal trade to Bengal and Orissa in the north and Sri Lanka in the south. To illustrate the extent of his shipping and overseas trade activities, we may note the evidence available for 1626–7. In March 1626, we hear of a ship of his from Pegu awaited at Pulicat, which eventually arrived followed closely by another of his from Mrauk-u. In September 1626, he dispatches the *Masulipatam* to Pegu with a cargo – of his own goods as well as the freight of other merchants worth 15,000 Pulicat *pagodas*; the next day he sends a yacht to Mrauk-u, and three days later, on the 2 October, a ship to Mergui. The next year, we find that his participation has increased still further: thus, a ship sent by him to Pegu in September 1627 returns to Pulicat in March 1628 with a cargo worth well over 100,000 Pulicat *pagodas* (or f.420,000).[24] It would appear then that, of the three major lines – Pegu, Arakan and Tenasserim – with which he concerned himself, the first was commercially the most valuable, and the

[21] For example, see Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, I, pp. 673, 718–19.

[22] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 33, refers to the yacht, which in 1626 left from Pulicat for Pegu on Achyutappa's account.

[23] On the purchase of the ship, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 75v. For a more detailed account of Mir Kamaluddin's activities, see the succeeding section.

[24] For examples of his shipping, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1090, fl. 247 (March 1626); VOC, fls. 599v, 601; VOC. 1095, fls. 38–9, 43v, 62.

second – the trade in rice and elephants to Arakan – the least so.[25] During the 1620s, the trade with Arakan was frequently a triangular one, and Achyutappa's ships would pass from Pulicat to Mrauk-u directly, but return via Masulipatnam. Whether on account of this or for some other reason, Achyutappa maintained a factor called Pedde Chetti at Masulipatnam, and his commercial affairs at Golconda were possibly further secured by his rumoured close friendship with Mansur Khan Habshi, *Sar-i-Khail* at Golconda in the 1620s.[26]

The fortunes of Achyutappa appear to have been more or less continuously on the rise from about 1620 onwards. The Dutch letters of 1632 give us the following pieces of information, which when seen conjointly add up to an impressive and fascinating picture of his range of activities. To begin with, of the total Dutch textile order of 32,460 Pulicat *pagodas* placed at their central Coromandel factory in that year, Achyutappa's own share was 23,565 *pagodas*, much of which would be paid him only on delivery.[27] In addition to this, he was committed to supply the VOC with saltpeter, transported overland from Madurai, and large quantities of rice. At about the same time, his revenue-farming activities involved sums in the region of 33,000 *pagodas*, and he had persuaded the Dutch to give him some cannon, which he intended to put to use at his fortified house in Devanampattinam,[28] and in prosecuting the career of his brother Chinanna as field-general in the *palaiyakkarar* wars in the vicinity. Finally, the Dutch *Dagh-Register* maintained at Pulicat in 1632 tells us that in September of that year, he dispatched one ship to Mrauk-u, a second to Orissa, a third to Pegu, and a fourth to Mergui, besides a fifth that was captured by the Portuguese near Porto Novo.[29]

It might appear from the above description that Achyutappa had almost single-handed brought Pulicat back on the map of Coromandel's long and medium distance trade. It would not be the whole truth however to suggest that he was the sole shipowning Asian merchant

[25] These references, *ibid.*, would tend to cast some doubt on Brennig's characterisation ('Chief merchants and European enclaves', p. 325) of Achyutappa and Chinanna as only marginally involved in seaborne commerce.

[26] On Pedde Chetti, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fl. 1145. Mansur Khan Habshi was, as we note later, also a close friend of Mir Kamaluddin; he was eventually 'executed' on the grounds that he was conspiring against the Golconda Sultan.

[27] See *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fls. 246–7. The rest of the textile order was distributed among the following: Padmanabha Brahmin (1960 *pagodas*), Bommai Chetti (2060 Pa), Nalla Bommai Chetti (1450 Pa), Nalla Thambi Sarapa (410 Pa), Andi Chetti (1020 Pa), Murthi (995 Pa) and Siva Chetti (1000 Pa). Clearly none of the other merchants remotely approached Achyutappa in terms of scale of operations.

[28] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 30.

[29] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 277.

operating in that vicinity. In 1625 and 1626 respectively, we encounter references to a ship each from Devanampattinam and Puducheri to Aceh, the first owned by the son of a *nayaka* of the region, and the second by a Marakkayar trader.[30] From about 1624, two other sets of participants also make their presence felt. First, ships from Arakan, belonging to the King Thirithudamma (1622–38), and the *kotwal* of Mrauk-u begin to appear at Pulicat almost every season, together with those of Haji Baba, a major merchant based at Mrauk-u to whom we have already referred, and who later moved his residence to Masulipatnam; these ships usually make the same triangular voyage mentioned earlier, except that their preferred route is Mrauk-u – Pulicat – Masulipatnam – Mrauk-u.[31] The second new element in the trade appears in 1624, with the arrival at Pulicat of a ship from Mergui, owned by the Ayutthaya ruler (first Song Tham and then Prasat Thong), which rapidly became an annual feature as well, arriving between mid March and early April.[32] A large portion of the cargo on this latter vessel was destined for Masulipatnam though, since it was only on rare occasions – such as when an ambassador from Ayutthaya to Chandragiri arrived on this ship–that the ship stayed at Pulicat, it usually moving on to trade in northern Coromandel. Nonetheless, these ships show that Achyutappa was not the only Asian shipper to use Pulicat in the period, and, in addition to them, we have in 1632 (for example) at least two other ships at Pegu, owned by other Marakkayar merchants at Pulicat.

Chinanna Chetti: the man who would be king?

When Achyutappa Chetti died in March 1634, the mantle of the VOC's chief broker in Coromandel fell on his younger brother Chinanna. Chinanna has already received some attention in an earlier section of this chapter, as a more politically ambitious merchant than his brother, with a penchant for diplomacy and even for direct participation as a field general in the internecine warfare of the 1630s in the northern Tamil and southern Andhra regions. A thumbnail sketch of Chinanna's activities in the period has been

30 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fls. 200–1; VOC. 1090, fl. 247; VOC. 1095, fl. 1026.

31 The shipping from Arakan in 1624 is mentioned in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fls. 185–7, that of 1625 in VOC. 1087, fls. 200–1, and those of the succeeding year in VOC. 1090, fl. 246. Finally, Arakan shipping of 1628 is mentioned in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1094, fl. 73.

32 In fact the earliest reference to royal shipping from Tenasserim-Mergui to Coromandel is from March 1624 in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 187. Thus, the statement in George V. Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand*, p. 85, to the effect that the link begins in 1628 requires modification.

provided some years ago by Joseph J. Brennig in a study of Company brokers on Coromandel;[33] however, it may be useful not only to recapitulate but to elucidate at some length aspects of his career left ambiguous in that account.

In March 1634, when his brother died, Chinanna was occupied in besieging the fortresses of Katur and Kolur, held at that time by Aravidu Timma Raja, father-in-law of the deceased Chandragiri *raja*, Ramadeva. These activities were undertaken by him on the instructions of the Vijayanagara ruler, Venkata, and were soon accomplished with the aid of cannon that were lent Chinanna by the Dutch. With the success of this endeavour, he returned to Devanampattinam, and rebuilt his little fortress there, which had been – as pointed out in an earlier section – destroyed in the mid 1620s by Tiruvengalaiya, *dalavay* of Senji.[34] This fort was armed on reconstruction with a dozen good cannon procured by Chinanna from his friends, the VOC, and for whom, in this very period, he was doing immense service at the court in Chandragiri by neutralising the effect of a Portuguese embassy headed by Padre Pero Mexia S.J.[35] Indeed such was his prestige at this point that the Chandragiri Raja even asked him to intercede and arrange a meeting of the warring Nayakas of Senji, Madurai and Tanjavur. It was with this meeting that Chinanna's troubles began. Here, he conspired with Tubaki Krishnappa Nayaka, *éminence grise* at Senji, to eliminate the other two Nayakas; on this being discovered, the two had to flee the camp by night and in haste.[36] At about the same time, troubles between Chinanna and the rest of his extended joint family came to the fore. Unlike Achyutappa, Chinanna appears to have been abrasive and difficult to get along with, particularly when in a position of authority. He fell out, as a consequence, with on the one hand his nephew Sesadra, and on the other with his own brother Kesava, who with his son Laksmana was based at Puducheri.[37] This latter feud was a particularly bitter one, and lasted the whole of Chinanna's lifetime, causing him and his second-in-command and nephew, Koneri, immense difficulty in subsequent years.

[33] Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', pp. 325–8.

[34] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1113, fl. 318.

[35] On Pero Mexia, see *HAG* Monções do Reino 19D, fls. 1142, 1154v, 1155, 1156v, *passim*; ANTT, DRI, Livro 37, fls. 15-v, Livro 40, fls. 140–1; also *AR*, OB, VOC. 1117, fl. 686, on the fort at Devanampattinam.

[36] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1122, fl. 624. This incident occurred in January or early February 1637.

[37] *AR*, OB VOC. 1130, fl. 978; also see N. Macleod, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie als Zeemogendheid in Azië*, Volume II, pp. 13–15, 170–1.

By early 1638, the feud had ripened to a point where Kesava and Laksmana persuaded Tubaki Krishnappa Nayaka at the Senji court to take Koneri prisoner and hold him to ransom. The latter, apprehending this, fled to Chinanna's fort at Devanampattinam, but Chinanna – when faced with the superior force of Tubaki Krishnappa – meekly handed over not only his nephew, but all of 40,000 *pagodas*, three elephants, and his entire stable of fifty horses to the Senji noble.[38] This inventory of possessions alone suggests that we are dealing here with no ordinary merchant, for such a merchant would scarcely have a small fort of his own, armed with twelve pieces (inclusive of three brass cannon). Nor does Chinanna's exhorbitant lifestyle – with his forty wives and innumerable children – speak of his being the sort of self-effacing merchant that the stereotype for late pre-colonial India presents.[39] While continuing his tangled imbroglios within the region, Chinanna was at the same time the owner of a considerable fleet of mercantile vessels, following in the footsteps of his brother, Achyutappa. In September 1639 alone, for example he sent two ships to Pegu, and another to Tenasserim (or Mergui), besides a couple of others from Porto Novo and Devanampattinam to Melaka, having in the previous season sent two to Mrauk-u.[40] In November 1639, a Dutch factor investigating the tin ports of the Malay Peninsula found a ship belonging to Chinanna at Kedah, the *nakhuda* being one Pattu Kutti Marakkayar.[41] The following year, in April, three other ships of his arrived at Pulicat from Aceh.[42] Thus, if the shipping season of 1639–40 is any indication, Chinanna had become a formidable shipowner, with perhaps ten ships bound for various parts of the Bay of Bengal. The four ports active in the central Coromandel region in this period where the overseas trade was concerned seem to have been Pulicat, Devanampattinam, Puducheri and Porto Novo. Of these four, Chinanna preferred to operate from Pulicat and Devanampattinam, using the latter particularly when he clandestinely cooperated with Portuguese traders. Puducheri, on the other hand, was the favoured base of operations of his estranged brother Kesava Chetti, who, together with his son Laksmana Nayaka, was settled in the port. In 1639, Kesava

[38] Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', p. 326; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1127, fl. 227, January 1638.

[39] The reference to Chinanna's numerous wives is from a later date, 1649, and refers to his flight from Devanampattinam to Puducheri after the fall of Senji fort in January of that year. See *AR*, OB, VOC. 1172, fls. 523–4.

[40] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1130, fls. 978, 1049.

[41] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1133, fls. 464–5, dated January 1640.

[42] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1133, fls. 433–6.

despatched two ships to Aceh and Kedah respectively, and the latter returned in March 1640 with a considerable cargo, including 26,000 kilograms of tin, two elephants, a horse and seventeen civet cats.[43]

Despite, or perhaps on account of, his considerable power, Chinanna's relations with the VOC began to sour by about 1640, as did those of Kesava. The Dutch were in particular concerned with the fact that they suspected the two of trading and carrying the freight goods of Portuguese merchants based in Coromandel. This Chinanna hotly denied, declaring to the VOC factors in May 1640 that 'if at any time even one Portuguese or ten reals of eight in goods of the Portuguese were found in his ships, the Dutch could not only take all the goods and the ship, but enslave all those on board'.[44] Besides Chinanna and Kesava, whose trade was decidedly beginning to worry the Dutch, other new participants soon became evident in the trade of these ports. In March 1640, a large ship of the Sultan of Kedah arrived at Puducheri with tin, pepper, and elephants; the ship sank directly on reaching the coast but the greater part of the goods on board were saved.[45] So too the King of Arakan, Narapatigyi (r. 1638–45), continued the earlier practice of sending vessels from Mrauk-u, and a ship of his is seen to arrive at Devanampattinam in April 1639. The 1640s also see the growing participation of others, such as Tubaki Krishnappa Nayaka himself, also using the same four ports. To briefly survey the information available to us for the period between 1641 and 1644, see Table 6.1 for Pulicat, Devanampattinam, Puducheri and Porto Novo taken together.[46].

The increasing interest taken by Tubaki Krishnappa Nayaka in shipping and mercantile activity reflected, at least in part, his continuously growing rivalry with Chinanna. The rivalry was fuelled by Laksmana, whose position as a shipowning merchant and trader had declined since the death of his father, Kesava Chetti, in December 1642.[47] Having lived briefly in Pulicat as a broker in 1643, Laksmana left in early 1644 for the Senji court, determined to reenter

[43] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1130, fl. 978; V.O.C. 1133, fls. 435–6.

[44] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1133, fl. 463, dated May 1640. At about this time, Chinanna even insisted that he would visit Batavia, to meet the Governor-General and explain to him how he was being maligned, though in fact an honest man (see VOC. 1143, fl. 658v).

[45] The ship arrived on 25 March 1640, with five elephants, 36,000 kg. tin, 5,000 kg. 'harpuys', 1,200 kg. pepper, and 25 civet cats. See *AR*, VOC. 1133, fls. 435–6.

[46] The tables are based on the following records, all from the series *AR*, OB:
1641–2: VOC. 1135, fls. 278v–279; VOC. 1138, fl. 435.
1642–3: VOC. 1138, fl. 447v.
1643–4: VOC. 1147, fls. 541, 571.

[47] The death of Kesava Chetti is mentioned in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1151, fl. 727.

Table 6.1. *Recorded central Coromandel shipping, 1641–4*

PART A: by destination

Destination	1641–42	1642–43	1643–44
Aceh	2	3	2
Melaka	—	—	1
Kedah	4	1	1
Mergui	3	1	2
Pegu	2	—	1
Arakan	1	1	2
Bengal	1	1	—
TOTAL	13	7	9

PART B: by owner

Owner	1641–42	1642–43	1643–44
Chinanna + Koneri	6	3	3
Kesava + Laksmana	4	2	1
Tubaki Krishnappa	—	1	3
Royal shipping*	2	1	2
Other	1	—	—
TOTAL	13	7	9

Note: *denotes shipping owned by the rulers of Ayutthaya, Arakan and Kedah.
Source: See note 46.

the fray, and offering to take up his old base of operations, the Puducheri region, in revenue-farm.[48] By the middle of the same year, he had succeeded in turning Tubaki Krishnappa against Chinanna; as a result of this, the latter's fort at Devanampattinam was razed and then taken over and rebuilt by Tubaki Krishnappa for his own use. Meanwhile, Chinanna had entered into open hostilities with the VOC, who had gone over his head to negotiate with Tubaki Krishnappa for the setting up of factories at Puducheri and Porto Novo. Attacks on Dutch factors and their Indian servants by the retainers of Chinanna and Koneri brought as a result a sharp exchange of letters between Arnold Heussen, Dutch chief on the coast, and Chinanna.[49] By early 1645, a formal accord was reached

[48] On Laksmana Nayaka's departure from Pulicat in February 1644, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1147, fls. 553–60.

[49] This incident is described in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1147, fl. 568; it apparently occurred in May 1644.

between the two, under which Chinanna agreed not to repeat his earlier aggression; but this broke down soon, so that in August 1645, Chinanna used his still-considerable influence to persuade Sriranga, the Chandragiri *raja*, to lay siege to the Dutch Casteel Geldria at Pulicat.[50] This siege had to be lifted after a brief period though, on account of a renewed attack on the region by Bijapur and Golconda forces, in a continuation of the southward push begun late in the 1630s. Brennig in his study of the region notes that after an attempt by Chinanna to enter the field and oppose Mir Muhammad Sayyid's forces at Udayagiri early in 1646, which ended with no more than a formal show of resistance, Chinanna and Koneri left for Pulicat. Brennig concludes that, at this point, 'Chinanna accepted a Dutch invitation to return to Pulicat, where his activities over the next decade remain obscure'.[51] An examination of the Dutch records does shed some light on the twilight of this remarkable career, which we shall dwell on briefly before concluding the section.

In July 1646, Chinanna accompanied Sriranga Raya on a visit to Fort Geldria, where the latter was received with much honour, and a cannonade by way of salutation. It was clear however, as much to the Dutch as to Chinanna, that the Raya's fortunes were on the wane, so that soon after Chinanna returned to his fort at Devanampattinam, by now recovered from Tubaki Krishnappa.[52] Krishnappa himself, sensing like Chinanna that the days of the Chandragiri *rajas* were numbered, had earlier gone over to the Golconda forces, establishing himself as a close aide of Muhammad Sayyid.[53] The campaign was more or less lost by January 1649, when the last major redoubt, Senji fort, fell to the *Khan-i-Khanan* of Bijapur, Mirza Murad Ali Baig.[54] As part of their consolidation in the Senji area, Bijapur forces entered Devanampattinam, where Chinanna surrendered his fort

[50] Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', p. 327; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1152, fls. 173–82; *EFI [1646–1650].*, p. 18, Swally to the Company, 3 January 1646, where one hears of 'differences betwixt the Dutch and Mollai, their quondam merchant...'.

[51] Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves' p. 328.

[52] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1161, fls. 988-v (July 1646).

[53] On Tubaki Krishnappa, see Brening, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', pp. 326–8, 332–3. He continues to figure in English and Dutch records until late 1658, as an important actor in central Coromandel politics, politics, and close associate of Muhammad Sayyid; cf. *EFI [1651–1654]*, p. 240, as also *EFI [1655–1660]*, pp. 95, 98–9, 135–6, 174–5. Here we gather that his rivalry with Koneri continued, though the two are referred to as 'neere relations'.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 328–9;

without even a show of resistance – this despite the fact that he had no shortage of men, cannon or munitions, and faced a small opposing force.[55] In characteristic fashion, he plunged into the new political milieu. From 1648, he had – through the intermediation of his nephew Koneri – begun dealing with the arch rivals of the VOC, the English Company.[56] By April 1649, he had met and reached an understanding with the *Khan-i-Khanan*. Despite his being 'bereft of means' and 'completely in the dust' in the opinion of the Dutch factors, he succeeded in securing from the Bijapur administration Devanampattinam, Porto Novo and Puducheri in farm for the sum of 25,000 *pagodas*, and further even ransomed Koneri (who was being held by Murad Ali Baig) with a bill of exchange worth 50,000 *pagodas*.[57] In September 1649, Chinanna, sent ships from Porto Novo to Kedah and Perak in collaboration with the *Khan-i-Khanan*, and it seemed that he had once again emerged triumphant in the new political configuration. His troubles continued though much as before. His nephew, Laksmana, who together with Tubaki Krishnappa, was now in the Golconda camp of Mir Muhammad Sayyid, denounced him to Murad Ali Baig, so that he was hauled off in chains to Bijapur, returning only in September 1651 to Senji.[58] In the same year, he sent two ships for the *Khan-i-Khanan* from Porto Novo to Aceh, and took on the same region in farm.[59] It would appear however that his lavish lifestyle and considerable expenses in furthering his ambitions through military adventures finally led to his financial decline. The revenue farm of the Senji coastal areas was finally taken away from him late in 1653, and placed first under direct Bijapur administration, and later given to a rival Chetti.[60] The last major service he rendered to the VOC was to negotiate with Vijayaraghava Nayaka of Tanjavur a *kaul* legitimising the VOC's *de facto* control over Nagapattinam, once the Portuguese there surren-

[55] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1172, fls. 523–4, 535; see also N. Macleod, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie als Zeemogendheid*, Volume II, pp. 407–8.

[56] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1172, fls. 555, 575.

[57] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1172, fl. 291v.

[58] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1184, fl. 321. 'De staet van Sr Chinanna legght alweder geheel int voetsant ende dat ten principalen door contramines van Letsemeneyck omtrent den veltoverste Chanchanan ...'. See also fl. 166 of the same volume.

[59] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1172, fl. 167; VOC 1188, fl. 410v.

[60] Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, II, p. 600 [24 December 1652], mentions that he still holds the 'gouverno' of Devanampattinam et cetera for a payment of 22,000 *pardaus* yearly. However, by January 1654, we are informed that he had been stripped of it and 'daerin weder Moorse regenten sijn gestelt' {*GM*, II, p. 714}. On the appointment of 'Eleppo' Chetti to the same government, see *GM*, II, p. 792, 26 January 1655.

dered their fort in July 1658.[61] In 1659, he left Pulicat for the Tanjavur region, to farm the revenue of the ports there for 47,000 *pagodas*. However, the Dutch records inform us that he died later the same year, bringing to a close a remarkable – and remarkably diverse – career.[62]

Mir Kamaluddin: a study in resilience

We have argued in an earlier chapter that the convention used in much of the historiography on southern India in the sixteenth and seventeenth century – of a separation of the history of Golconda from that of the region farther south – is an artificial and questionable one. Given the syncretic ideology of Golconda on the one hand (ably demonstrated by N. Venkataramanyya and H.K. Sherwani, among others), and of the Nayaka kingdoms on the other, as well as the fact that many of the economic processes delineated in earlier chapters of this study were common to these political entities, there seems little reason to treat the river Pennar as a serious watershed, separating one form of political economy from another. Nor does this necessitate resort to the 'Hindu-centred' view of southern India, inherent in work of anthropologists such as Arjun Appadurai, who believe that 'in South India, in the three centuries that preceded British rule, a *single* system of authoritative relations united religious and political interests, and wedded them into a flexible and dynamic pan-regional network' – based on the expansion of Hindu, Vaisnavite temples.[63]

An examination of the careers of some of the Persian portfolio capitalists operating in the Andhra region in the early seventeenth century lends support to our hypothesis: combining as they did political and military activity, with external and internal trade, shipowning, and interface with the Companies, there is very little to separate them in general terms from persons such as Achyutappa, Chinanna or Tubaki Krishnappa. There were, of course, ethnic differences. Whereas the persons whom we have discussed earlier

[61] For the text of this *kaul* in Dutch, see J.E. Heeres, ed., *Corpus-Diplomaticum Neerlando Indicum*, Deel II, pp. 127–8; for the Telugu version, K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'Two Negapatnam grants', in *South India and Southeast Asia,* pp. 200–3.

[62] His death is reported in Coolhaas, ed., *GM*, III, p. 261. See also Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', p. 332.

[63] Cf. Arjun Appadurai, 'Kings, sects and temples in south India, 1350–1700 A.D.', *IESHR*, Volume XIV (1), 1977, p. 73. It is clearly the single-minded concern with Hindu ritual and its effect on 'political economy' which prompts Appadurai to picture South India without Islam, or Muslim communities.

were Balija Naidus and Razus, Telugu speakers in the main, there were in Golconda a somewhat different group who exercised a dominant position in the first half of the seventh century. Such information as we have suggests, we have already noted in an earlier chapter, the dominance in the late 1620s of a handful – half a dozen to ten – merchants of Persian origin, predominantly Sayyids, based at Masulipatnam. These Persian shipowners were – almost without exception – participants in a major way in court politics and administration. Almost every *havaldar* or Masulipatnam in the period is seen to partake of the seaborne commerce, and to be governor of the area was highly significant in the career graph of nobles in Golconda, since a very high proportion of the *Sar-i-Khails* held that position immediately before becoming the head of the revenue administration.[64]

It would be instructive to consider at greater depth what we know of the career, interests and activities of one such shipowner – Mir Kamaluddin Mazendarani (or Haji Jamal). References to this operator in the Dutch records are available from the very early years of their presence on the coast. His influence at the court is mentioned on several occasions in the administration of Wemmer van Berchem.[65] In the decade 1610–20, references to his mercantile activities continue in both the Dutch and English records. He sends goods on freight aboard VOC ships to Banten around 1615, and – despite his none-too-good relations with Wemmer van Berchem – he is consistently referred to as their best friend on the coast.[66] In about the same period, in point of fact in July 1612, the *Tarikh-i Muhammad Qutb Shah* informs us that he led an army against the ruler of Bastar on behalf of the Golconda Sultan; the campaign was a short but succession of local governors, as well as in the court at Bagnagar. As to the Qutb Shah without a shot being fired.[67] Obviously an astute politician, Kamaluddin also mediated between the Company and a succession of local governors, as well as in the court at Bagnagar. As later references in the English records show, he kept his relations with all the Companies on a sound footing, rendering them services, but expecting services in return. By 1616, in addition to his overseas trade, he was clearly involved in a big way in the *qafila* trade to

[64] J.N. Sarkar, The *Life of Mir Jumla: The General of Aurangzeb*, pp. 7–15, also numerous references in the Dutch and English records of the period.
[65] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1057, fl. 144.
[66] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1056, fl. 146v; VOC. 1057, fls. 137, 144; VOC. 1062, fl. 58.
[67] Cf. *Tarikh-i Muhammad Qutb Shah*, 316–17, cited in H.K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, p. 419.

Bijapur, Goa and Surat, since both Pieter van den Broecke and Pieter Gilliesz van Ravesteyn encountered numerous commercial agents of his on these routes in the period.[68] His familiarity with the authorities in both Surat and Bijapur – the VOC factors carried letters from him to the *shahbandar* and *mutasaddi* of the former port to facilitate the recovery of David van Deynsen's effects[69] – argues for a considerable nexus with these centres. Not least of all, it is clear that in the trade from Bengal to Masulipatnam, carried overland to Pipli and moved by coastal vessels to Masulipatnam, he had a major role. Until the early 1630s, the Dutch had been deterred from the Bengal trade by two factors: the perceived strength of the Portuguese settled at Hughli, and the fact that the trade between Bengal and Masulipatnam was so extensive that they felt it was not worth their while to trade directly. In this extensive trade, persons like Mir Kamaluddin exercised a considerable influence.[70]

The Dutch – jealous as they were of their rivals – fell out to some extent with Kamaluddin in the 1620s. They continued to call on him for assistance in negotiations and embassies, but a growing coolness is perceptible, largely on account of his relations with the Danish Company and participation in the clove import from Makassar, as well as the fact that he was suspected of trade relations with the Portuguese settlers at Pipli and Nagapattinam.[71] The Dutch factors, in a fit of paranoia, accused him in their letters to Batavia of conspiring with other Persians to arrange their expulsion from Masulipatnam. Around 1627, his fortunes appeared to be at a high-water mark. On the one hand, he held the area around Narsapurpettai as governor, while on the other hand, his mercantile affairs were blooming.[72] In October 1627, the Dutch factors announced to their principals, 'Mier Comaldij is having a great ship made for the King at Narsapur, which he intends to send to Mocha within two months'.[73] A bare six months

[68] W.Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *Pieter van den Broecke in Azië*, Volume I, pp. 162–5, Volume II, p. 247, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 239–46, especially 239–42v.

[69] On van Deynsen, see Om Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India*, n. 47, pp. 14–15; *A.R.*, OB, VOC. 1061, fls. 186–8, Pieter Gilliesz van Ravesteyn's letter to the Kamer Amsterdam.

[70] On this trade, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 165; VOC. 1095, fls. 62–3, *passim*; Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, pp. 35–7; finally, for the participation of persons such as Mansur Khan in the trade, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 62v.

[71] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1100, fls. 61–2, 65–70; on Kamaluddin's cooperation with the Danes, see *inter alia AR*, OB, VOC. 1094, fl. 96.

[72] Masulipatnam to Batavia, 6 September 1625, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1087, fl. 207.

[73] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1094, fl. 99v. 'De Mier Comaldijn laet een groot schip voor den Coninck in Narsapour maecken, dat van meeninge is binnen twee maenden naer Mocha te versenden'.

later, however, there was a dramatic reversal of fortunes. The Masulipatnam *Dagh-Register* notes, 'On the first of March, a *farman* and order came from Golconda for the Moorish governor that he should take Mier Comaldij, a Moorish inhabitant, in apprehension here, and deprive him of his governorship of Narsapur and other nearby villages.'[74] The proximate cause for this action was that Mir Kamaluddin had contracted to build four or five ships for the Sultan, and had underpaid the workmen, as a result embezzling a sum of 20–30,000 *pagodas*. This was said to have been done over the past six to eight years, in which period – so it was rumoured – Kamaluddin had used his close association with Mansur Khan, *Mir Jumla* of Golconda, to move his own goods in and out of Masulipatnam toll-free. These accusations may have contained a kernel of truth, but the real reason for his arrest turned out to have been political vendetta, as Mansur Khan had been killed at the Sultan's orders – on accusation of treason – and his associates were in disfavour.[75] A brief sojourn at Bagnagar following his arrest however saw Kamaluddin return to favour, and by mid 1628, he was pursuing his activities with renewed vigour.

Early in 1629, however, the Dutch and the English Companies, which had long nursed grievances against the local authorities, decided to assert themselves. Withdrawing their factors from Masulipatnam, they began to capture shipping that was on return to Masulipatnam.[76] Some of these ships quickly modified their course to put in at less perilous alternative ports such as Vishakapatnam, but Kamaluddin apparently over-estimated the sense of gratitude of the Companies; his ships took no evasive action, and one was captured on the return from Aceh at the hook of Masulipatnam, while another – the ship to Mocha – after surviving a boarding attempt by the Dutch at Narsapurpettai, was later seized by the English. The cargo of the ship from Aceh comprised twenty-three elephants, 14,000 kg of tin, 10,000 kg of pepper, besides eighty-three *bahars* of sulphur, and some 5,000 *pagodas* worth of gold. The Dutch were forced to return much of this, as they were told that the greater part belonged not to Kamaluddin, but various Surat merchants, as well as to Mir Azim Shah, the Persian monarch's representative in Gol-

[74] Dagh-Register Masulipatnam, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1096, fls. 71v–72.

[75] The death of Mansur Khan is mentioned in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 47. These aspects of Golconda politics have, for some reason, remained occult in J.N. Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, pp. 7–15.

[76] On these questions, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1098, fl. 489, 507; VOC. 1100, fls. 63–4; also *EFI [1624–29]*, pp. 339–42, letters from Armagon to Bantam dated 6 and 25 June 1629, and p. 346, Armagon-Bantam, letter dated 20 August 1629.

conda, whom they could not afford to alienate. They had to remain content with five elephants and the gold, which Kamaluddin admitted were his.[77] The Dutch believed however that these captures had broken him financially and otherwise, even though the ships were returned after negotiations. In January 1630, they declared in a letter to Pulicat, 'Mier Comaldij is also ruined through and through, and lies now in the dust, with little hope of his ever being able to stand up again.'[78]

Mir Kamaluddin was, as the next five years showed, not quite as ruined as the Dutch thought him to be. His influence and prestige as a merchant continued to be such that he, together with a few other merchants, was nominated in 1634 by Azim Khan, *Nawab* of Bengal, to fix the rates of duty on the goods imported by the VOC into that Mughal dominion.[79] And crucially, it was Kamaluddin who effected the major change in the direction of Masulipatnam's Asian owned shipping in the 1630s, opening up for them the sea route to the Persian Gulf.

In our discussion in an earlier chapter of the relations between the Sultanate of Golconda and the *Estado da India* in the last decade of the sixteenth century, we have noted that one of the crucial elements was the ship of the Sultan that was sent, laden with pilgrims, rice and textiles, to Mocha The protracted negotiations with Goa in that period were aimed, in substantial measure, at securing the Masulipatnam – Red Sea route for Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah's ships. With the arrival of the Dutch and later the English in Masulipatnam, relations with the *Estado* rapidly deteriorated in the early sixteenth century. In 1615, with an attack on Golconda coastal villages in the Motupalli region by Ruy Dias de Sampaio's flotilla, the boats were burned as much literally as figuratively.[80] There was now open season declared by the *Estado* on Masulipatnam shipping, the first major victim being one of the Sultan's ships on the Red Sea run, captured while outward bound at Tuticorin in January 1621 by the *Estado*'s escort fleet at Cape Comorin.[81] A second capture on the

[77] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1098, fl. 489; VOC 1100, fls. 63–4.

[78] Masulipatnam to Pulicat, 14 January 1630, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1100, fl. 84. 'Mier Comaldijn is oock door geruijneert, leydt nu heel int voetsant met weynich aparentie van wederom op te staen'.

[79] J.E. Heeres, ed., *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*, Deel I, pp. 266–7; Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, p. 37, note 38, where the author remarks dryly, 'This certainly was a most unusual procedure'.

[80] See António Bocarro, *Década 13 da História da Índia*, Volume II, pp. 620–2; for Dutch versions of this incident, see W. Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *Pieter van den Broecke in Azië*, Volume I, p. 164, and *AR*, OB, VOC. 1065, fls. 71–3.

[81] A. da Silva Rego, ed., *Documentos Remetidos*, Volume VII, pp. 390 and 422, Documents 278 and 305, both dated 8 February 1622.

same run in 1625 caused a sharp reaction, and the Sultan sent a stern message to the VOC factors, declaring that, since it was on their account that he had broken off with the Portuguese, it was their responsibility to protect his shipping.[82] It soon became customary as a consequence for the VOC (and later the English and Danes) to provide a few gunners, and a pilot to service these ships and keep the monarch content.

While the sea lane to the Red Sea had been explored with regularity ever since about 1590, the lane to the Persian Gulf was, for various reasons, not broached. Until 1622, with Ormuz in Portuguese hands, there were probably fears of the price to be paid; on the other hand, the large ships favoured by Masulipatnam shippers in the period could scarcely hope to slip past the choke-point, unlike the smaller *navios de remo* of the west coast.[83] In the late 1620s, however, with Ormuz out of Portuguese hands and an ever stronger presence of the northern Europeans in the Gulf, the idea was indeed broached. There was already in this period a considerable market for northern Coromandel textiles in Persia, which had hitherto been serviced either through transshipment at the Red Sea ports, or via a complex land-cum-sea route, which meant that the textiles were carried from the weaving villages of northern Coromandel overland to Chaul, Dabhol and Surat, and shipped from there to the Persian Gulf.[84] Nonetheless, the market did exist, and it was almost exclusively for the products of the north Coromandel belt; the textiles of central Coromandel and the Cuddalore-Nagapattinam region were not vendible in this market. In June 1634, after the direct sea route between Masulipatnam and Ormuz/Bandar Abbas had been in operation a few years, a VOC factor estimated the Persian market for Coromandel textiles to be worth 266,055 *rupias*, and comprised of well over 4,000 bales annually.[85]

The existence of a market of such dimensions prompted the merchant-shipowners of Masulipatnam to think seriously in terms of sending a ship to the Gulf each year. They were however rather nervous of the *Estado da India* and of Ruy Freire de Andrade's

[82] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fls. 53v–54v.

[83] *Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, Volume V, Document 1065, pp. 100–1; see also Ashin Das Gupta, 'Indian merchants and the western Indian Ocean', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XIX, No. 3, 1985, p. 492.

[84] For instance the ships belonging to Shahjahan and his sister which left Surat in 1646 carried Golconda textiles to the Middle East. See the shipping list in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1166, fls. 797–806, especially the cargos of the *Ganj-i-Sawai* and *'Salabij'*.

[85] This document is published in H. Dunlop ed., *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis der Oost-Indische Compagnie in Perzië, 1611–1638*, The Hague, 1930, pp. 490–3.

cruising fleet in that area. In May 1628, Mulla Muhammad Taqi Taqrishi, governor of Masulipatnam, asked the Dutch, in an extended interview, either to provide freight-services to the Persian Gulf from Masulipatnam, or to give him support by way of gunners, cannon, and pilots for such a venture, Ormuz being the intended destination.[86] This put the VOC in something of a spot, as they were thinking of entering the trade themselves, and hence were wary of potential competitors. They replied that they would ask Batavia for an opinion, and put the decision off. The English Company had meanwhile taken the decision to offer freight services to the Gulf, and, with trade at a low level in the early 1630s on account of the famine, they had plenty of idle shipping available.

The first English ships to do the Masulipatnam-Persian Gulf run were the *Mary* and the *Exchange* in July 1632, and these carried as freight fifty-eight bales of textiles on the private account of Company factors, besides 321 bales belonging to Masulipatnam merchants. The latter had to pay 8.5 *pagodas* as freight on each bale, and in addition sent five maunds cloves, fifty-three *bahars* tin, ten bales tobacco and eighty-eight slaves – all for the Middle Eastern market.[87]

A bare two days after the departure of this ship, the Dutch factor Barent Pieterszoon was called to the *banksal*, and read a letter from the court at Golconda. This informed him that the Sultan had just received permission from the Shah of Persia at Isfahan, to send a ship there and that hence the ship *Mansuri* of Mir Kamaluddin was to make the voyage. All help was requested from the Dutch, who under the circumstances really had no option but to cooperate.[88] Despite a storm in November of the same year, when the ship in question almost went down at Narsapurpettai, the link was successfully inaugurated that year. It left in December for Persia, and was described as sent 'in the name of the King of Golconda', highlighting once again the curious equation between merchants such as Kamaluddin and the Sultan. However, the Dutch noted that, on account of the English shipping, Kamaluddin was unable to find many freight goods to send on it, but the ship's passage was necessary anyway, since it was intended not merely as a trading vessel but to bring the ambassador of the Shah of Persia to Golconda, without his having to pass through the Mughal empire.[89]

The VOC having loaned twelve men to Kamaluddin for this ship

[86] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1095, fl. 74.
[87] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 277; also see *EFI [1630–1633]*, pp. 215, 236, *passim*.
[88] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 283.
[89] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 305v.

were in an awkward position the following year when two ships were equipped for Persia, both on account of Kamaluddin. Batavia grumbled, but the help was given a second time. A curious incident occurred on this occasion. On 21 May 1634, one of the two ships returned (the so-called 'great ship') from Persia having completed the return journey in forty-three days. It was discovered though that its sister ship 'on coming in sight of Ormuz wanted to fire a salute, but the cannon burst, so that the magazine caught fire, the ship sank and everything was finished; over 600 men, both Moors and slaves which the ship had on board were killed, and only one person saved'.[90] Further, the ship which returned had not fared well commercially either, and had a return cargo of little worth, carrying no more than some chests of rosewater, almonds, raisins, dates, and some Persian silk and pearls. This was not a little surprising, given that VOC factors at Bandar Abbas had reported the arrival of the ship there in March 1634, carrying over 400 bales of diverse textiles, 600 bales Bengal sugar, 100 bales of turmeric, 1,000 bales gum-lac, and 120 bales tobacco, scarcely a poor cargo.[91] Notwithstanding this, Kamaluddin fitted out a ship again after a hiatus of a year, during which time he concentrated on the trade with Makassar, with the aid of the Danish Company.[92] On this occasion, in November 1635, he was joined by another ship, that of an up-and-coming Masulipatnam merchant, Malik Muhammad. Kamaluddin himself embarked on this voyage, apparently anxious to return to his homeland in the twilight years of his life.[93] The voyage was to prove a disaster. In early March 1636, the English at Surat received an urgent message from Dabhol, that 'an auntient Persian named Mier Camaldyne whome some of us are knowne almost twentye years to have been a powerfull and most constant friend to our whole nation in Mesulapatam' was stranded there,[94] having failed to complete his voyage to Persia, and lost his ship. A frigate, the *Francis*, was despatched to pick him up, together with other merchants, and ferry him to Bandar Abbas. It turned out that Kamaluddin had managed to leave Golconda with great difficulty, against the wishes of the Sultan, 'after great solicitation of himself and freinds that hee may visitt the toombe of a certain

[90] This curious incident is described in *AR*, OB, VOC. 1113, fl. 319, 21 May 1634.
[91] List of arrivals in Gombroon, in H. Dunlop, ed., *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis*, p. 474.
[92] On Kamaluddin's participation in the trade with Makassar, see *inter alia AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fls. 283, 304.
[93] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1117, fl. 686; VOC. 1119, fl. 1149.
[94] Instruction to the Captain of the *Francis*, 4 March 1636, *EFI [1634–36]*, p. 175.

prophet upto which he is much devoted'.[95] On March 22, the *Francis* arrived at Dabhol, and the journey to Gombroon was begun with Kamaluddin and others paying 11,000 *larins* to the Company as freight charges.[96]

However, off Jask, the ship was turned back in the face of a storm, with the septuagenarian Kamaluddin having to importune the alcoholic English captain, Andrew Warden, to return to India. They arrived at Chaul, where Kamaluddin promptly fell down the stairs of his hired house, 'bruising himself most vilely'. Here he remained in an invalid condition until September 1636, when the English sent the *Kit* to fetch him. By now, there were further complications as the governor of Surat, Mirza ul Zaman, insisted that he be brought there to pay customs duties! In November, we find him at Surat, resident in a separate section of the English lodge, and endeavouring to absent himself whenever the governor visited.[97] As mysteriously, he disappears from all records with this reference of November 1636, and may be presumed either dead or to have returned to Persia. In September 1636, in the last reference to him the Dutch records, we find the VOC factors (whose memories were rather short where past differences were concerned) declaring, 'Mier Camaldij, who during a long period had saved us from many difficulties, is in Persia, so that now there is no one on whom we can really depend'.[98] In early 1638, the same source informs us that Malik Muhammad had acquired one of Mir Kamaluddin's ships and was planning to send it to Ormuz.

Muhammad Sayyid Ardestani: trader, general, and operator

If Kamaluddin's career has received but little attention in the literature so far, the same cannot be said of the life of Mir Muhammad Sayyid Ardestani. If anything, Muhammad Sayyid's career, from his birth in Persia around 1591, to his death in the service of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, has been traced on so many occasions that it may seem all too familiar to the reader.[99]

[95] *EFI [1634–36]*, pp. 137–8, Surat to the Company, 6 March 1636.
[96] *EFI [1634–36]*, pp. 195–6, Andrew Warden at Chaul to Surat, 20 April 1636; see also pp. 187–8.
[97] *EFI [1634–36]*, Diary of William Methwold, p. 310, entry for 15 November 1636.
[98] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fl. 1147, 25 September 1636, 'Mier Comaldij die ons langen tijt van veel onlusten heeft westen te bevrijden is naer Persia soo dat bij naer nu niemant hebben daerop ons met fundament verlaten connen'.
[99] In particular, see J.N. Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla;* Joseph J. Brennig, 'Chief merchants and European enclaves', pp. 327–8; Joseph Brennig, 'The textile trade of northern Coromandel', pp. 27–35.

However, there are two problems with existent treatments of his career: first, they tend to perceive Muhammad Sayyid as a warrior with a peripheral interest in trade (thus, the title of his only biography *The Life of Mir Jumla, the General of Aurangzeb*), and secondly, they portray him as a unique phenomenon, operating it would appear almost in a context of his own creation. This is far from true, for before Muhammad Sayyid assumed a position of importance, in the 1630s, there had already been Persian portfolio capitalists of some distinction in Golconda, including Mirza Rosbihan Isfahani, Mulla Muhammad Taqi Taqrishi and Mir Kamaluddin, while after him came persons such as Sayyid Muzaffar, and the brothers Akkanna and Madanna Pandit.

To sum up the early years of Muhammad Sayyid's career briefly, he seems to have arrived in Golconda in the early 1620s as a horse trader, and made a fortune in the same decade by running the Kolluru diamond mine under an assumed name. It is of some importance to note that, during the first half of the 1630s, he kept a low profile, and does not appear to have been affected by the slump of that period (which we shall describe in a later section of this chapter), given that his finances were not intertwined with fate of the fiscal administration in the period. After a brief period as *sardaftardar* (or keeper of the royal records), he emerges into prominence in 1636 as the *havaldar* of the Nizamapatnam area, in which capacity he enters into conflict with the VOC.[100]

In June 1636, after becoming governor of the entire Mustafanagar circle, Muhammad Sayyid approached the Dutch with a request. He wanted them to send a ship from Masulipatnam to Bandar Abbas with his goods, as well as those of other merchants, as freight. The Dutch procrastinated, pointing out that the English Company was better in a position to provide such a service, since they had recently signed a peace treaty with the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*. After a few months, the Dutch did allow Muhammad Sayyid space on a vessel to Persia, but relations did not remain cordial for long.[101] The Dutch factory at Nizamapatnam (or Peddapalli) became the scene of a protracted conflict, and Muhammad Sayyid even threatened to expel the VOC from there, declaring, according to Dutch factors,

[100] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fls. 1115–16, 1139–45; Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*, pp. 39; Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, p. 10, is somewhat naive in his presumption that Muhammad Sayyid's relations with the Companies were everywhere and always amicable.

[101] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fls. 1115–16, Masulipatnam to Batavia, 2 July 1636; VOC. 1119, fls. 1139–40, Masulipatnam to Batavia, 25 September 1636.

that, 'in place of us, he would obtain free trade privileges for the Portuguese'.[102] After a stormy interview with a Dutch factor, the VOC factory was actually attacked, and one of the Company servants captured and maimed. The Dutch reacted by complaining vociferously in the court at Golconda, both to the *Mir Jumla*, and to the Persian ambassador. When, late that year, Muhammad Sayyid was summoned to the court, it appeared that their protests had been heard.[103]

But this was not to be. When Muhammad Sayyid returned from the court, it was in grand state, having been given the title of *Sar-i-Khail*, and a salary of 3,000 *hun*. He plunged once again into the fray, and early in 1639 decided to send to Bandar Abbas a ship that he had had newly constructed at the shipyard in Narsapurpettai; for this, he demanded and received twelve mariners, a steersman and five cannon on loan from the VOC, while the Danes and the English for their part contributed three pieces each.[104] The *Sar-i-Khail*'s annual shipping to Persia continued in subsequent years; Dutch factors at Bandar Abbas report in February 1641 the arrival of his vessel of the next season, carrying some 800 packs of textiles, 500 packs of Bengal sugar, and 400 bales of north Coromandel indigo, among other goods.[105] In addition, Muhammad Sayyid began to show a marked interest in trade in the eastward direction, to Burma, to Aceh, and even to Makassar. It soon appeared to the Dutch and English that this was competition they could ill afford, and, even worse, that there was very little they could do about it.

But Muhammad Sayyid's star was still on the ascendant. With the aid of his patron, the *Mir Jumla*, Shaikh Muhammad-ibn Khatun (and rumours of an illicit relationship with the mother of the Sultan), he became *Sipah salar* (or head of the army) in 1642, and was sent southward to prosecute the next step of the Golconda campaign in the Karnatak. Besides, in 1643, after his initial successes in the campaign against the Chandragiri *raja*, he was also appointed *Mir Jumla*, and Nawab of the southern conquests.[106] In the 1640s then, there can be little doubt that he cut the largest swathe in the elite politics of Golconda, and he put his diplomatic connections and prestige at the court to effective use in furthering his own seaborne commerce.

[102] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fl. 1140, '... dat in plaetse van ons vrij geleyde voor de Portugesen wilden procureren'.

[103] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1119, fls. 1158–9, 1161–3, 1167–9.

[104] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1130, fls. 1037–8, Masulipatnam to Batavia, 8 January 1639.

[105] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1135, fls. 669–70, Shipping List of Gombroon, 1640–1.

[106] Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, pp. 11–12; *AR*, OB, VOC. 1138, fl. 417; VOC. 1147, fl. 541.

From early in his career, Muhammad Sayyid had maintained close relations with the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, and, while this was perhaps deviant from the 'official line' taken by the Sultanate, he was not alone in maintaining such a connection. Mansur Khan Habshi, an earlier *Sar-i-Khail*, had traded jointly with the Portuguese of Pipli, and we may note that, in the early 1630s the VOC factors suspected even Mir Kamaluddin of cooperating with the Portuguese in his trade with Makassar.[107] Through the late 1630s, Muhammad Sayyid maintained close contact with D. Felipe Mascarenhas, (later to be viceroy of the *Estado* and in the period Captain-General of Ceylon), trading with him both at a personal level, and as a representative of the *Estado da Índia*. In this elaborate arrangement, the two traded in jewels, both those from Pegu and the diamonds of Golconda itself, and Muhammad Sayyid used his political weight to send rice to the Portuguese garrisons in Ceylon under the nose of the VOC factors, receiving in exchange cinnamon and elephants. Under the shadow of this increasingly powerful noble, other Masulipatnam merchants took the opportunity to trade with Jaffna as well.[108] So high was his standing with the Goa administration that an Augustinian friar, Francisco Ribeiro, sent as ambassador to Golconda in 1641, carried explicit instructions from the Viceroy Conde de Aveiras, to deal with Muhammad Sayyid alone, or, in his absence, with his son Muhammad Amin.[109]

Muhammad Sayyid's principal interest was in the trade to the Persian Gulf and Basrah, in which he succeeded Mir Kamaluddin. However, in addition to this trade, we know of his participation in the trade to Pegu, Aceh, Perak and Kedah, as well as Ceylon.[110] In the course of the 1640s then, this powerful personage seems to have come to dominate Masulipatnam's shipping for two reasons: first, his financial resources were vastly superior to those of any other merchant, and secondly, in the matter of obtaining *cartazes* from the VOC for sailing the Bay of Bengal's waters (a matter of some difficulty after 1641), he was far better equipped than any other merchant-shipowner. At the same time, as the protracted campaigns against first Sriranga Raya and his allies, and then the Bijapur forces, wore on, Muhammad Sayyid began carving out a substantial *jagir* for

[107] See note 71 *supra*; also *AR*, OB, VOC. 1100, fls. 61–2, 65–70.
[108] See for example *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda [1643–47], Mss. 1164, the case of 'Ascalle Mouro', fl. 238.
[109] *HAG*, Regimentos e Instruções No. 4 [1640–46], Mss. 1421, fl. 11–v. Also *HAG*, Conselho da Fazenda [1637–43], Mss. 1163, fl. 171v on the same embassy.
[110] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1135, fls. 669–71, shipping list for Bandar Abbas 1640–1.

himself, based in the fortress-town of Gandikota. From here he managed his maritime interests, kept a close control over the trade in diamonds produced at the Kolluru mine, and at the same time conducted his campaigns. The French jeweller, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who visited him in Gandikota was much impressed by the efficiency with which the operation was run, as indeed by the fact that Muhammad Sayyid maintained a personal bodyguard of 5,000 men.[111] Besides, the Persian showed a keen interest in the use of artillery, employing a French cannon-founder at Gandikota, and several artillerymen of Italian, French and English origin.

The Dutch Company factors, whose initially belligerent tone had given way to obsequiousness in their letters to Muhammad Sayyid, were hard put to deal with this. In the late 1640s, now confident of his position, Muhammad Sayyid had begun demanding preferential rights to purchase VOC imports of copper and cloves, and even flaunted his association with the Portuguese Makassar-based trader, Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo, to them, inviting Vieira to Gandikota.[112] In January 1651, the English factors at Fort St. George wrote to the Company, sketching the extent of his activity:

> The whole kingdom of Gulcundah is governed by him, of whome the people stand in feare and subjection unto as to the King himselfe. The revenues that hee yearly brings the King in amounts unto twentye hundred thousand pegodaes... The revenues that he hath taken from the Jentue in the aforesayd countrye is to the somme of fortie hundred thousand pegodaes per annum. Hee hath of his proper owne four thousand horse, three hundred elophants, foure or five hundred cammels, and tenn thousand oxen, which transporteth his goods up into severall countryes, as Gulcundah, Vizapore and into dyvers partes of the Great Maguls country...Concerning forran navigation, hee hath trade to Pegue, Tenassaree, Acheen, Rackan, Persia, Bengalla, Moka, Peruk, Maldeevaes and Macassar. Hee hath ten vessels of his owne, and intends to augument them, makeing much preparatyon for building of more.[113]

But this situation did not endure. By 1653, the dominant position of the *Mir Jumla* had become a threat to the viability of the Sultanate. Muhammad Sayyid himself felt insecure, and it is known that he had thoughts of returning to Persia in this period. In the event, matters

[111] For a summary of Tavernier's account, see Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, pp. 441–50, 465–73.

[112] On Muhammad Sayyid's relations with Francisco Vieira, see C.R. Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo.*

[113] Walter Littleton and Venkata Brahman at Fort St. George to the Company, January 17 1651, *EFI [1651–54]*, pp. 12–13.

were brought to a head late in 1655 by the imprisonment of his son; the *Mir Jumla* now negotiated successfully for a position in the Mughal aristocracy with Aurangzeb, and 'defected' with his son in early 1656, to die in Mughal service with the title Muazzam Khan seven years later.[114]

The overwhelming dominance of Muhammad Sayyid at Masulipatnam between about 1639 and 1655 meant in turn that his departure in the mid 1650s left a considerable vacuum. In time this vacuum was filled by the English private shipowning traders, who were, by the 1680s, the dominant element in Masulipatnam's trade overseas. Other traders were reduced to freighting space on board their ships, and there is perceptible a general decline in the Asian owned shipping based at Masulipatnam.[115] There are still some Persian shipowners who remain in Masulipatnam as late as the 1680s, but these persons – for instance Mir Fakruddin or Mir Kasim – were either minor coastal traders, or owners of small yachts,[116] scarcely comparable with the 600 ton vessels of Mir Kamaluddin or Mir Muhammad Murad in the 1620s or the great ships of Muhammad Sayyid in subsequent decades.

The context of portfolio capitalism

An examination of the sources on south-eastern India in the period from 1500 to 1650 suggests that substantial changes occurred in the processes of political participation over this century and a half. Central to these changes was the rise of a group of persons whom we have termed portfolio capitalists, persons whose careers transcended simple functional boundaries, or the basic roles often associated with the caste system.

That caste in pre-colonial India was far more fluid and subject to constant redefinition than might appear to be the case when perceived through the prism of colonial documentation is now well-

114 Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, pp. 441–4.

115 For a detailed discussion of the decline of Asian shipping from Masulipatnam, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Persians, pilgrims and Portuguese: the travails of Masulipatnam shipping in the western Indian Ocean, 1590–1665', *Modern Asian Studies*, 1988.

116 This is evident from the following Dutch shipping lists (all *AR*, OB):

1681–2: VOC. 1378, fls. 2083v–2089.
1682–3: VOC. 1405, fls. 1356–9.
1683–4: VOC. 1405, fls. 1811–13v.
1684–5: VOC. 1414, fls. 568–71v.
1685–6: VOC. 1423, fls. 816–18v.

recognised in a good part of the literature. Indeed, early Portuguese uses of the term *casta*, from which arose the English 'cast' and eventually 'caste', are notorious for being fluid as an organising rubric. Derivative from the same root as 'chaste' (masc. *casto*), *casta* to Portuguese writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century could mean 'lineage' (thus Sayyids were termed by them 'Mouros da casta de Mafamede'); it could equally be used interchangeably with *raça* (race), with *nação* (nation: significantly derivative from the verb *nascer* – to be born), and even with religious denomination ('gentio', 'mouro' etc.).[117] When acquired by early seventeenth century English writers, such as William Methwold, the word retained its ambiguity. To Methwold, 'cast' could be used interchangeably with what he termed 'tribes or linages', and in south-eastern India, he distinguished these into 'Bramene', 'Fangam' (Jangama?), 'Committy' (Komatti), 'Campo Waro' (Telugu, Kapu Waru, transformed here into the Portuguese *Campo* [field] to underline their agriculturist leanings), 'Boga Waro' ('the Whoores Tribe'), the smiths all forming one 'tribe', and 'all other mechanike trades' being 'tribes by themselves'. Finally, Methwold notes that 'the worst... are the abhorred Pirawes, who are not permitted to dwell in any town by their neighbours, but in a place without by themselves live together'.[118] Other contemporaries of Methwold, such as Antonio Schorer and Pieter Gilliesz van Ravesteyn define caste through endogamy; thus, Ravesteyn declares that 'there are eighteen castes which cannot intermarry, but each man must marry in his own caste', while Schorer asserts that 'when they [i.e. Gentus] are fit to learn a craft, they must learn that which their father and his caste follow'.[119]

Such articulations, which were grist to the mill of early Orientalist discourse, are clearly problematic for the reasons we have noted above: the vagueness with which 'caste' is used by these writers as a rubric under which to organise society, and their aptness to confuse theory (as presented to them by the Brahmin *linguas* who served them as their informants) with the reality around them. Consequently, Burton Stein and M.N. Srinivas, among others, have suggested

[117] See *Dicionário da Lingua Portuguesa*, ed. José Pedro Machado, Lisbon, 1960 pp. 217, 221; *Diccionário Contemporâneo da Lingua Portuguesa*, ed. F.J. Caldas Aulete, Lisbon, 1925, Volume I; finally, the entry against *casta* in A.J., *A Compleat Account of the Portugueze Language. Being a Copious Dictionary of English with Portugueze and Portugueze with English*, London, R. Janeway, 1701.

[118] Cf. 'Methwold's relation', in W.H. Moreland, ed., *Relations of Golconda*, pp. 14–19.

[119] See the remarks by Antonio Schorer and Pieter Gilliesz in *Relations of Golconda*, pp. 58–59, 70–1.

that southern India in the pre-colonial period was characterised by 'widespread and persistent examples of social mobility'. These were associated by Stein with *spatial* mobility; thus, ranking systems developed within narrow, local contexts were subject to substantial redefinition given the substantial population movements which clearly occurred in the period. Srinivas for his part has noted that 'a potent source of social mobility in pre-British India was the fluidity of the political system'.[120]

A substantial confirmation of these views is provided by recent work on the so-called *idangai-valangai* conflict in sixteenth and seventeenth century southern India. It is evident that the period saw an effort on the part of migrant groups, who defined themselves as of the *valangai* (right-hand) to assert their upward mobility; in the seventeenth century, several of these (including the Balija Naidus) lay claim through apocryphal genealogies to warrior status.[121] It has also been argued by Vijaya Ramaswamy, in a study of artisans in the Vijayanagara period (that is the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), that such an attempt at upward social mobility is evident in the interface between *valangai* and *idangai* groups and the Hindu temples to which they made substantial donations of land and money.[122]

It is apparent that, from the late sixteenth century on, the composition of the 'middle ground' between state and producing economy was inhabited by persons who both represented, and were agents of, changes in the political economy of the region. Some of these were drawn, like Achyutappa or Tubaki Krishnappa, from Telugu-speaking communities, and others such as Sidappa (*havaldar* of Masulipatnam in the period 1605 to 1620) were Niyogi Brahmins. But others were migrants across longer distances, and it is significant to note that the social context was sufficiently flexible to accommodate these persons as well. Here one refers to the Persian portfolio

[120] Cf. M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Berkeley, 1966, pp. 6–45, and extensive quotations from Burton Stein's writings therein.

[121] On the Balija Naidus or Balija Chettis, see Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Volume I, Madras, 1909, pp. 134–45. It is particularly significant that the Balijas sometimes claim descent from the Nayakas of Tanjavur (in particular Sevappa), and as a consequence relationship with other Nayak rulers; other oral traditions have them closely linked to Kamma and Kapu lineages. For a brief account, see V. Narayana Rao, 'Heroes and heroines in Telugu folklore', in *Knowledge, Performance and Transmission in Folk Performances* (Papers of the South Asia Seminar, 1987–88), University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (forthcoming).

[122] See Vijaya Ramaswamy, 'Artisans in Vijayanagara Society', *IESHR*, Volume XXII (4), 1985, pp. 417–43.

capitalist, and his occasional Habshi counterpart, who found on the Coromandel plain an arena for their complex of skills. What then did the portfolio capitalist do, and in what manner was he related to his context?

The economic expansion in southern India from the mid sixteenth to the late seventeenth century can quite clearly be associated with the utilisation of both the extensive and the intensive margin. In the wet areas, which is to say the river valleys, the great deltas, and the western coastal strip, agriculture grew more intensive, while, at the same time, land was cleared and the less tractable soils of the dry regions were brought under the plough. We shall argue ahead that an expansion in population was in all probability necessary for agricultural expansion and for the utilisation of extensive and intensive margins. Yet these had to be financed; if new land were to be cultivated, it had first to be cleared, and if permanent dams and irrigation channels needed to be constructed, these required financing too. Stein, Ludden and others suggest that in the dry areas, where the extensive margin was the more important element, the entrepreneurial and financing role was played by *palaiyakkarars*, and one can see that such activities would have strengthened the position of these personages in intermediating between immediate producers and the state.[123] Another set of persons who provided entrepreneurship, and on whom one might focus here, were the revenue-farmers of the seventeenth century Coromandel plain.

It would perhaps not be an exaggeration to assert that the rise of revenue-farming is the single most important fact of the political economy of south-eastern India in the period. Their growing dominance is evident from the east Godavari delta all the way to Tanjavur, and a recent study of Tirunelveli too notes, 'It seems clear that a tension-ridden series of speculative revenue contracts channelled tribute from Tirunelveli localities to Tirunelveli town and to Madurai with some regularity after 1600 A.D.'[124] The conventional picture of the revenue-farmer in the Indian historiography is of an albatross, whose very presence signifies the imminent collapse of the agrarian system. The reasoning behind this is as follows: for a state to take recourse to this 'arbitrary' form of fiscal control in place of the

[123] Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 426–7; David Ludden, 'Ecological zones and the cultural economy of irrigation in southern Tamilnadu', *South Asia* (N.S.), Volume I (1), 1978, pp. 1–13.

[124] David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, p. 71; also see B.A. Saletore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire (AD. 1346–AD. 1646)*, Madras, 1934, 2 Volumes, Volume I, pp. 210–18.

'bureaucratic' modes available signals that the state is venal and corrupt. Further, revenue-farmers are seen as characterised by their penchant for short-run maximisation, and from this flows the consequence – that the agrarian system under such a regime collapses under an ever expanding fiscal burden.[125] Recent work by André Wink poses the problem in a somewhat different light. With a view to explaining revenue-farming in the Maratha heartland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, he notes that, under the broad ambit of the term 'revenue-farming', a diversity of actual arrangements lie concealed. Fiscal arrangements, it is argued, are distinguished from one another by two factors, the degree of supervision exercised by central authority (and in inverse relation the degree of risk borne by the collector) on the one hand, and the length of the tenure on the other. Thus, at one end of the spectrum, the 'revenue farmer' fades into the category of the autonomous chieftain, paying *peshkash*, while at another end he merges into a more bureaucratised tax collector. Further, Wink notes that recourse is taken to revenue-farming in specific contexts, on the borders of territories (such as between the domains of Peshwa and Nizam), and more crucially 'on the frontier of agriculture and wasteland'. From this follows his general proposition that 'revenue farming was one of the organizational means of agrarian restoration and expansion, internal as well as external', as also that 'even in its most unalloyed form, revenue-farming did not normally have a destructive effect upon agriculture in either the short or the long term'.[126]

On the contrary, as evidence from both Golconda and the central Coromandel plain shows, the presence of revenue-farming was a means of ensuring agricultural expansion. The revenue-farmers themselves, of whom we have noted several examples, such as Sidappa, Malik Muhammad, Mir Kamaluddin and Mir Muhammad Sayyid in Golconda, and Achyutappa and Chinanna further south in the central and southern Coromandel regions, often invested considerable sums of money in the farm – sometimes as much as 30,000 to 50,000 *pagodas*. Yet, far from being the fly-by-night operators usually envisaged in the literature, they were frequently long-term residents of the region, and had – as a consequence of their

[125] This is the thesis propounded for example in Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556–1707)*, Bombay, 1963, and in N.A. Siddiqi, *Land Revenue Administration under the Mughals, 1700–1750*, Bombay, 1970.

[126] André Wink, 'Maratha revenue farming', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XVII (4), 1983, pp. 591–628; also see his *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the 18th century Maratha Svarajya*, Cambridge, 1986.

trading and other activities – a rooted interest in the continued well-being of the producing economy. The institution of revenue-farming is thus best seen as representing the fiscal politics of compromise, and once one locates the revenue-farmer in a power structure, looking janus-faced not only to those above but those below, the simplistic picture generated by Moreland and his generation of historians emerges suspect. In sum then, elements such as the *palaiyakkarars* in the dry regions, and the portfolio capitalists who acted as revenue-farmers in the more prosperous wet regions may be seen to have provided the wherewithal for agrarian expansion. It would appear that, under such a regime, the revenue collected by the state may well have increased, but as Wink observes, 'a prolonged increase in the revenue demand presupposed the stimulation rather than the neglect of cultivation.'[127] At least one contract between a revenue-farmer and the cultivators of a village in the east Godavari region in the late seventeenth century outlines the numerous concessions that such revenue-farmers offered to those who cleared land and undertook agricultural improvements, whether through irrigation or other means.[128]

The portfolio capitalist of seventeenth century southern India engaged in a set of activities which interpenetrated, and could, we have noted above, be mutually reinforcing. Yet, at other times, the very fact of this combination could be debilitating, as is evident from the case of Golconda in the 1630s. In this period, it would be recalled that the shipowning community at Masulipatnam was comprised in large measure of Persian Sayyids, who, almost to a man, were as involved in administration and in revenue-farming as in overseas trade. The early 1630s, a period of *agrarian* slump, was a trying time for the community as a whole.

It has been common to assume in the literature on pre-colonial India that one can separate cyclical phenomena from the trend or general tenor of economic events. The normal way in which agrarian production crises are treated is, consequently, as temporary dislocations after which the economy returns to even keel, retaining its structure in pristine form.[129] Given the nature and dimensions of

[127] Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, pp. 341–2.

[128] For these documents, see *AR*, OB, VOC. 1511, fls. 1149–53, 'Vier stucx actens raeckende den lantbouw op voorschreven dorpen door den E. Bacherus gegeven tot Daetcherom op 21 Augustij 1692'.

[129] On the 1630s economic crisis, see the recent and excellent study by Anthony Disney, 'Famine and famine relief in Portuguese India in the 16th and early 17th centuries', paper presented to the *Fourth International Seminar on Indo-Portuguese History*, Lisbon, November 11–16, 1985, and references therein. For a

some of these crises – particularly that of the 1630s – this is scarcely likely to have been the case. Glimmerings of the problem were already evident in the storms and unseasonal winds of the late 1620s, which had taken a toll of the coasts's shipping. With a low level of rainfall in 1631, followed by unseasonal downpours between July and September 1632, which brought inland transport to a halt around Masulipatnam, there were indications that the annual cycle had gone awry.[130] The famine and shortage had affected Gujarat and the west coast somewhat earlier, reaching a peak in 1632 there, and as a consequence the Companies had turned increasingly to Coromandel as a source both of textiles and rice. But this was to prove an impossibility, with the crop output in the winter of 1632 being low, and with a great cyclone in the Masulipatnam region which destroyed a great part of the cotton crop in November 1633. By the summer of 1634, the prices of yarn were 75 per cent above the normal, and, in September of that year, paddy prices were roughly two-and-a-half times the pre-crisis level. In fact, the crises continued through as late as 1636, with the Dutch factors making optimistic forecasts every sowing season, only to see continuing shortages after the harvest. The winter of 1635 was a particularly severe one, since, in addition to local supplies being low, the normal consignment from Orissa in January 1636 failed to arrive (rice prices reaching f. 5.625 a pond, as opposed to a normal of f. 1.75), and it was not until mid 1637 that we see normalcy returning. The fall in production and increased hoarding began to take a toll of the administrative structure, and after repeated 'revolts' of the *pargana* level officials, put down by strong measures, a point was reached in June 1635 when around Nagulvancha we are told that 'the land is completely in revolt, and on account of the war all is destroyed and the country a wilderness'.[131] This may have been an exaggeration, but the difficulties the administration were facing is reflected by their inability to secure even such a crucial link as that between Masulipatnam and Bagnagar. As *qafilas* were robbed, the merchants approached the Sultan, stating that they were willing to finance an expeditionary force against the bandits. The administration came down with a heavy hand, and several minor *nayakas* of the

comparative perspective, also see W.S. Atwell, 'Some Observations on the "Seventeenth-Century Crisis" in China and Japan', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume XLV (2), 1986, pp. 223–44.

130 The evidence on weather changes is from *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, VOC. 1113, VOC. 1117 (numerous references), while that on prices is largely from VOC. 1113, VOC. 1117, VOC. 1119 and VOC. 1222.

131 *AR*, OB, VOC. 1117, fl. 665v.

Table 6.2 *Departures from Masulipatnam, 1632–3*

Destination	1632–3	1633–4
Arakan	—	3
Aceh	1	1
Pegu	—	1
Tenasserim	1	—
Mocha	—	—
Persia	1	2
TOTAL	3	7

Source: See note 133.

region were beheaded, and others taken to the Court.[132] Yet stricter enforcement meant little else but a stronger reaction, and the Persians, whose liquid assets were tied up in the well-being of the fiscal structure were the inevitable sufferers. This in a nutshell was the crisis that affected the larger and more prosperous Persian merchant-politicos of Golconda for almost six years. Evidence of this emerges from their drastically reduced participation in trade, as shown in the shipping lists of the early 1630s (see Table 6.2).[133] Of these, the ships sent to Arakan in the winter of 1633 were largely on account of the impending shortage of rice, and were hence in part emergency supply missions. The others are of greater interest and reflect the changed character of shipping at Masulipatnam during this period. There is a marked decline in the participation of the Persian portfolio capitalists of Golconda, and this occurred, one would argue, on account of the *agrarian* crisis, and reflected the fact that the asset-portfolios of these entrepreneurs were to a good extent invested in agrarian revenue-farms, the income of which fell off, plunging them into a liquidity crisis. Since such fiscal commitments frequently lasted three years, there was little chance that they could cut their losses in the short term either. With these shipowners unable to raise the wherewithal to finance their annual voyages, shipping from Masulipatnam to the Bay of Bengal littoral ports fell in jeopardy.

However, there was at least one class of shipowners whose fortunes were not affected, and these were the persons based not in Golconda but in partner ports. From 1624, one large ship belonging to the Thai ruler had been trading between Mergui/Tenasserim and Masulipat-

[132] *Ibid.*
[133] The figures for 1632–3 are from *AR*, OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 279, and those for 1633–4 from OB, VOC. 1109, fl. 317.

nam, and, with the exception of the year 1633–4, the royal shipping between Mergui and Masulipatnam is one of the constant features in the otherwise fluctuating composition of shipowners operating at Masulipatnam, and this continues late into the seventeenth century and can be encountered in the shipping lists of even the decade 1710–20.[134]

In addition to the Ayutthaya ruler, it has been noted that the King of Arakan, in the period Thirithudamma (r 1622–38), annually sent one or more ships from Mrauk-u to this port. In the mid 1630s, another important participant in the trade was Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh, who, in the twilight years of his reign, made a habit of sending a large ship, with his own commercial agents as well as independent traders on board to Masulipatnam. In April 1634, the Dutch factors at Masulipatnam noted with some dismay,

> Before Masulipatnam is also a great ship belonging to the Acehnese king, which has arrived from Aceh with eleven elephants, besides being laden with pepper, tin, sulphur, benzoin, camphor, eaglewood, silk et cetera. It seems that the King of Aceh has himself become a merchant, and it is apparent that as long as the shortage of textiles here continues and the *Atchijnder* himself sends his ships, there will be little for the Company to do in Aceh by way of the textile trade, as the arrival of the Siamese and Acehnese here with so great a capital will see the textile price here rise, and definitely hinder us.[135]

This royal trade, which continued for a few more years, and ended with Iskandar Muda's death (which coincided with the end of the agrarian slump), seems to have been prompted by the following. While the unseasonal weather pattern in Coromandel put matters out of kilter with serious debilitating effects on the manufacturing economy as well as on the shipowning community of Masulipatnam, the same agrarian crisis did not affect Masulipatnam's trading partners, whose demand continued to be as strong as ever. Thus, in the absence of the normal trade flows from Coromandel, we see a stepping up of trading activity on the part of traders based in the partner ports. In the aftermath of the slump, when the Golconda economy was beginning to recover, there is also a perceptible renewal in the activities of the Masulipatnam shipowners. But the profile of shipowners is not what it was before the recession; instead of a fair number of shipowners, the community is now dominated by a single personage, Mir Muhammad Sayyid Ardestani.

[134] This is shown in the shipping lists from the periods 1681–6, 1699–1705 and 1713–20 all preserved in the Algemeen Rijksarchief, Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren.

[135] *AR*, OB, VOC. 1113, fl. 317v; see also fls. 324–5.

Thus, the entrepreneur of the diversified portfolio enjoyed certain distinct advantages, but also suffered from some perceptible disadvantages. Moreover, once into the second half of the seventeenth century, it becomes increasingly clear that at least one aspect of his activities – namely as an *independent* overseas trader, was under severe threat. We have noted how in the first half of the seventeenth century, the VOC succeeded in large measure in displacing Coromandel traders from a large market – south-east Asia – by dint of main force. However, in other markets trade continued, while even in these disputed arenas the *Mir Jumlas* and *Khan-i-Khanans* of Coromandel trade maintained their links, though smaller fry – the *mestiços* and Marakkayars of Nagapattinam, for instance – had to tread softly.

This situation changed substantially in the last third of the seventeenth century The growth of European private trade within Asia, slackening control by the Companies over trade routes, and a growing dichotomy – wherein the market of major interest for the Companies became Europe, that for the private European trader Asia – arose.[136] Yet this new context seems, if anything, to have made things more difficult for the entrepreneur who interested himself in a diversity of activities, to pursue trade as an independent shipowner. Arasaratnam has argued that the new political and fiscal structures that emerged at the close of the seventeenth century, following on the Mughal conquest of southern India, left limited space for the entrepreneur of the diversified portfolio to gain access to the state, and operate under its umbrella. Recent work, notably that of Tsukasa Mizushima, suggests a more complex picture; Mizushima's study of the *nattar*, a privileged group comprised in eighteenth century Chingleput, Arcot and Tiruchirapalli of Reddi, Pillai and Brahmin elements, clearly demonstrates that these persons held a diversity of interests, including fiscal rights, privileged tenures and substantial livestock, besides trading overland in grain, and farming revenue-rights. Yet, despite this complex network in which they participated (which significantly replicates, albeit on a more limited scale, the activities of the rural magnates of the eighteenth century Maratha Deccan), there is no evidence of *nattar* involvement in overseas commerce[137]. This certainly suggests that the growing private European trade may have curtailed the overseas shipping of Asian elements, especially on the coast of Tamilnadu.

[136] See Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, pp. 139–42, *passim*.
[137] Cf. Tsukasa Mizushima, *Nattar and the Socio-Economic Change in South India in the 18th–19th Centuries*, Tokyo, 1986, Chapters 2 and 3; also Frank Perlin, 'Of white whale and countrymen in the 18th century Maratha Deccan', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Volume V (2), 1978, pp. 173–237.

Trade and political participation: south-western India

When one looks to the south-west coast of India in the period from 1500 to 1650, one finds certain communities which appear to dominate external commerce: Mappilas and a heterogenous group of Middle Eastern Muslims in Malabar, Saraswats and Navayat Muslims in the Kanara region. To these we may add, besides, the Jewish traders of Cochin (at least one of whom – Samuel Castiel – assumed dangerous proportions in Portuguese eyes in the 1630s), and the Syrian Christians, concerning whose political and commercial role in the period little is known beyond the vaguest generalities. Besides, as in south-eastern India, the Malabar ports from the early decades of the sixteenth century came to be populated in part by private Portuguese and their mixed offspring.

In recent years, there is perceptible a tendency to treat these mercantile communities as a more or less distinct category, cohering more in themselves than in the society of which they are thought to be precariously a part. In a recent study, Philip Curtin has attempted to bring many of these communities under the ambit of the term 'diaspora',[138] which is to say a sprinkling across diverse ports and inland centres, who relate to one another commercially and otherwise and are agents of interface between societies, but marginalised in all societies. One of the few communities that comes to mind which does fit this description in our context are the Armenians, but their number in the ports of southern India was small indeed. Is it at all useful, one may ask, to treat trading communities of south-western India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries using this concept?

An examination of the evidence for southern India shows that, far from being dispersed, several of the important mercantile communities tend to be specific to particular, or at least well-defined, areas, and contrariwise many ports and stretches of coast are largely dominated by one or the other community. Thus, the Navayats – of such importance in Bhatkal – may not be found on Coromandel, while the Persian Sayyids who dominated Masulipatnam are not to be

[138] See Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 1–9, 144–8, *passim*. An earlier analysis by Denys Lombard, 'Questions on the contact between European companies and Asian societies', in L. Blussé and F. Gaastra, eds., *Companies and Trade*, Leiden, 1981, pp. 179–87, also argues like Curtin that there was a separation between trade and politics in India, with 'typical' groups like the Mappilas, Banias and the Armenians having no access to elite political structures. For a critique of the concept of 'diaspora', also see K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*, pp. 224–6.

encountered on the south-west coast. Importantly then, the 'diaspora' characterisation fails adequately to capture the rootedness of these communities in the broader framework of the society of which they are a part; thus far from clinging precariously to the margins of society, many of the mercantile communities mentioned above – the Balija Naidus, the Sayyids of Golconda, the Mappilas of Malabar, and the Saraswats of the Kanara coast – most certainly had access to the wider political world of their societies. Besides the Armenians, only the private Portuguese and *mestiços* – often described under the umbrella of *casados* – can be described at all adequately using the sterile ambit of the diaspora.

In our earlier discussion of Mappila and Saraswat resistance to the Portuguese in sixteenth century south-western India, an underlying theme was the essential triangularity of the relationship; the Mappilas of Ponnani and Cannanore, or the *Chatins* of Basrur found themselves manoeuvring between the *Estado da Índia* on the one hand, and political powers such as the Samudri *rajas*, the Kolathiris, or the Nayakas of Ikkeri on the other. If these struggles can be used to highlight the nature of the tensions between Europeans and Asians (as we were concerned to do in the previous chapter), they are equally significant as pointers to the nexus between militant trade and political power. Geneviève Bouchon in a series of important studies has in particular noted the delicate balance in the relationship between the Mappila leaders and the Kolathiri and Samudri; in reply to the Portuguese threat to commerce, the Mappila communities of central and northern Malabar responded with active resistance, growing increasingly militarised and politically powerful as the sixteenth century wore on. As a consequence of this process, the political and economic power that they wielded came to be a threat not merely to the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, but to the rulers of the major Malabar principalities. In Kolathunad, the Ali Rajas had by the close of the sixteenth century emerged with perhaps as much (if not more) influence on the seaboard as the Kolathiri *raja* himself. In the mid 1560s, they repeatedly attacked Portuguese fleets on the Malabar coast, laid siege to the Portuguese fortress at Cannanore, and even replaced the Christian king of the Maldives to take control of that archipelago.[139]

[139] Cf. Geneviève Bouchon, 'Sixteenth-century Malabar and the Indian Ocean', in A. Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, pp. 168–82; S.F. Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier*, pp. 46–56.

These activities, combined with the rise in Ponnani of Pate Kunjali Marakkar, appeared to have signalled a real threat to rulers such as the Kolathiri and Samudri, as much as to the Portuguese. The Calicut rulers responded to the threat that the Mappilas represented by delinking themselves from the Kunjalis, and allying instead with the *Estado* to demolish the principal Mappila bases in the late sixteenth century. The same exercise was repeated in the 1630s in a series of joint raids by the Portuguese and the Samudri *raja* on the Mappila strongholds of the coast.[140]

It might be argued then that a substantial difference existed in the nature of the interface between external commerce and politics in Malabar when compared to south-eastern India, or even the Kanara coast. In Malabar, the mercantile communities were relatively clearly defined and had a drive for power that was sufficient to overturn sovereign rulers, if left unchecked. This may have been on account of the relatively limited universe they inhabited, in which the potential for horizontal expansion was rather more limited than in south-eastern India. Thus, it was possible within the space of a decade and a half, for a Jewish merchant family in Cochin to acquire so substantial a wherewithal that the Portuguese *casados* of that town had to assassinate its principal member, a certain Samuel Castiel, from fear of his power within the Cochin state.[141] Equally, the close relationship between trade and the states of Malabar – whether symbolic or in the sense of the contribution of commercial revenues to the treasury – produced a picture that was somewhat different from that in south-eastern India. In this respect, Kanara provides an intermediate picture: from a situation in the sixteenth century which was not substantially different from that in Malabar, the incorporation of the coast into the Nayaka kingdom of Ikkeri brings about crucial shifts in the relationship between trade and politics. The position of quasi-autonomous groups such as the *hanjamana* of Basrur was undermined; trade on the coast is now increasingly associated with individual Saraswat merchants, often of great influence in the Ikkeri court, who trade in pepper and rice. Amongst these, we may count in the seventeenth century, such persons as Mange Nayak, Rama Kini and Vithala Sinai, who traded in ports such as Bhatkal, Basrur and Mangalore.

[140] On the attacks made on the Mappila 'ladroeiras' in the 1630s, see *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 37, fls. 427–8; also Livro 33, fls. 253v–54, and Livro 34, fl. 25.
[141] *ANTT*, DRI, Livro 50, fl. 110v; Livro 56, fls. 27, 212–v.

Conclusion

To return then to M.N. Pearson's characterisation of the place of mercantile communities in the societies of south Asia, it is important to stress that, at least in southern India, the hermetically defined and cellular social structure that he delineates cannot be thought to correspond with reality. The emphasis on the close identification of functions and social roles with ethnographic categories is, as emerges from recent writings, a relatively recent phenomenon, in large measure resultant from the political processes of the colonial period.[142] Within certain limits, the late pre-colonial period in south India was characterised not only by horizontal mobility but a certain fluidity in social super- and sub-ordination. This is clearly brought out when one examines the careers of such persons as Chinanna Chetti – a Balija Naidu with ambitions in elite politics – or Muhammad Sayyid Ardestani – an immigrant, on the face of it a member of a military-fiscal elite, but in fact an important shipowning merchant as well. Thus, we cannot believe axiomatically that southern Indian society in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries comprised of a set of well-defined and watertight compartments, in one of which it is possible to site the mercantile communities of the region.

Can one argue then that mercantile communities and interests represented a significant political force in southern India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, just as is seen to be the case in Japan, China or Europe in the same epoch? To affirm this need not imply that one must seek in India the particular manifestations of the political power of mercantile capital familiar to us from Europe; thus, the closed, walled city with its distinct culture that serves to underline the sharp disjunction in Europe of 'town' and 'country' is hazy and ill-defined in the south Indian case. Nor do we need to seek in southern India a corporately organised group of mercantile capitalists, prosecuting commodity exchange and overseeing urban manufacture. While so-called 'merchant guilds' are to be encountered in the writings on the history of south India before 1500, it has never been clear that these were organisations with continuity in activities and membership, or indeed that their activities were fundamentally of a

[142] Cf. David Washbrook, 'The development of caste organisation in south India, 1880–1925', in C.J. Baker and D.A. Washbrook, *South India: Political Institutions and Political Change 1880–1940*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 150–203.

commercial character.[143] Occasional mentions of these guilds continue into the first half of the sixteenth century, but, given the relatively dispersed and essentially rural based nature of commodity production, it is questionable whether these bodies can at all be compared to their European 'counterparts' on issues such as supervision over production.[144] Equally, the identification of the European guild with the closed burg (with all its attendant political and juridical status in medieval Europe) renders comparisons with the *Ainnurruvar* or other corporate bodies in south India questionable. In any event, the absence of mention in the records of the period 1550 to 1650 of such guilds suggests that certainly, at this time, these bodies had little role in the exchange economy, its links with the producing economy, or in interface between merchants and state in the period under consideration. When mercantile interests responded to the challenges of growing overseas trade in the context of a dominant exercise by Europeans of sea-power, it is unlikely to have been through the medium of the guild.

The relationship between external commerce and political participation is a complex one, and, even within southern India in the period 1500 to 1650, no single model is sufficient to explain the events and processes that occurred. It has been argued here that at least two major strands emerge from an examination of this region. On the one hand, the states of the south-west coast, on account of their scale, on account of the intensity of the European impact on trade in the sixteenth century, and very possibly on account too of the strong and cohesive bonds within a community such as the Mappilas, witnessed an essentially antagonistic relationship which developed between the long-term interests of traders and of some other sections of the elite. This was resolved, in Cannanore, by the emergence of the Ali Raja lineage as dominant over the Kolathiris, and in Calicut, by the successful demolition in the last quarter of the sixteenth century of

143 On guilds in southern India, see *inter alia* A. Appadorai, *Economic Conditions in Southern India (1000 to 1500 A.D.)*, Volume I, pp. 378–402; Burton Stein, 'Coromandel trade in medieval India', in J. Parker, ed., *Merchants and Scholars: Essays in the History of Exploration and Trade*, Minneapolis, 1965, pp. 47–62, as also Kenneth R. Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Colas*, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 147–55, *passim.*

144 A rare instance of a merchant body meeting to lay down certain regulations on production is to be found in the *TTDI*, Volume VI, Madras, 1936, No. 112, pp. 208–10. However, none of the conventional 'guild' names is used; those at the meeting are identified merely as 'the cloth and yarn merchants of Tondaimandalam, Puramandalam, and Ulmandalam'. Also see Vijaya Ramaswamy, 'Artisans in Vijayanagara Society', p. 433.

Mappila power by an alliance of the Samudri *raja* and the Portuguese state.

On the other hand, an equally instructive set of instances comes from south-eastern India. Here, we have noted in the early seventeenth century the presence of a diverse group of portfolio capitalists, drawn from different 'pure' ethnographic categories – some upwardly mobile mercantile elements, others from warrior lineages, and still others immigrants. All of them were united by a single thread: the perception that to flourish as overseas shipowners and traders, it was necessary to have access to the state, or (to look to the other side of the coin) that those with access to state power were in the best position to prosecute mercantile ventures on a substantial scale.

7
Situating trade: models and methodological strategies

Introduction

In this final chapter, the purpose is to attempt a general characterisation of the place of trade (in particular external trade) in the political economy of sixteenth and seventeenth century southern India. In the early chapters of this study, we traced the broad outline of state structures and fiscal regimes, the evolving structure of overland and coastal trade, and its relations with overseas trade. Subsequent sections dealt in detail with long-distance overseas commerce, and with certain specific issues which arose in that context. It is in the light of the information and arguments contained in these earlier chapters that the present one will be framed.

It is unfortunate but true that abstract thought on the relationship between trade, whether external or internal, and the material conditions in which they found themselves did not greatly exercise the inhabitants of southern India in the period. A few desultory remarks may be found, in treatises on royal conduct, on this theme, but these are usually normative, and do not rise above a regrettable level of vagueness. The poem *Amuktamalyada*, usually attributed to the Vijayanagara ruler Krishna Deva Raya [r. 1509–29] addresses the issue in two verses.[1] The one notes:

> A king should govern his ports so as to increase their trade by encouraging the import of horses, elephants, gems, sandal, pearls etc.; he should offer protection suited to the conditions of their race to people who migrate from other countries, owing to famine, pestilence and calamities.
>
> (Verse XLII)

The other verse similarly intones:

> Acquire the friendship of merchants of distant islands who import elephants and horses, by granting them villages, spacious houses in the capital,

[1] Cf. *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, ed. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya, Volume III, pp. 159–62; also see Volume II, pp. 196–8, for the original Telugu verses.

frequent audiences, presents, and good profits, so that they may not reach your enemies.

(Verse LV)

This represents, at a general level, a suggestive normative background for the policies that we know were in fact followed, first by the Vijayanagara rulers, and later, by the Nayakas, in respect of the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and even the Danes. But, beyond positing a relation between imports and warfare on the one hand, and imports and conspicuous or elite consumption on the other, they say very little about the significance of trade.

The significance of trade: some models

Not unnaturally then, modern-day writers on trade in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century have turned to another tradition to fathom the relationship between long-distance trade and specific economies: this is the western European tradition of Classical Political Economy. In this, their usual recourse has been to the early nineteenth century writings of David Ricardo, and to a lesser extent the late eighteenth century thought of Adam Smith. K.N. Chaudhuri, who has attempted a synthesis between this thought and the economic processes of the seventeenth and eighteenth century (in particular intercontinental trade) suggests that the Ricardian theory of comparative advantage – wherein comparative costs (and thus relative prices) under autarky determine which country is relatively efficient in producing which commodity, and hence the direction of flows – is inadequate for the pre-Industrial Revolution period.[2] He appears to suggest incorporating 'socially determined demand', as well as certain structural rigidities into the analysis – notably the fact that certain commodities had unique sources of supply. Chaudhuri's critique, while in part a valid one, says little of which modern-day international trade theory is not aware; the fact that demand was assumed to accommodate itself to supply (as was later articulated by Jean-Baptiste Say) in the major works of the classical system, is a commonplace. Besides, it is unclear why 'socially determined demand' once incorporated into a theory of trade, should lose its significance in the post-Industrial Revolution period.

Chaudhuri's writings do mark a departure from Ricardian principles however in another respect. Addressing the question of how 'the production system in general... [in Asia] felt the impact of long-

[2] K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean* pp. 16–20.

distance trade', he argues that one of the two linkages of importance was 'the familiar multiplier effect of an increase in demand expressed in the form of a higher volume of exports', which he believes, 'was as evident in the pre-modern economy of Asia as it was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.[3] This belief was earlier expressed in his study of English trade in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Asia, wherein he noted that 'the economies of the two great empires of Asia (the Mughal Empire and China) greatly benefited from the expansion of economic relations with the West. The huge influx of bullion which resulted from the new demand was only one indication of the growth in income and employment'.[4]

Such an argument, of the workings of a foreign trade multiplier, wherein an autonomous increase in the demand for exports leads to substantial increases in production and employment in the domestic economy, had already been laid down in a systematic fashion by Om Prakash, in a study of the economy of early eighteenth century Bengal.[5] He argued that a 'rather impressive increase in income, output and employment' took place in Bengal as a consequence of a persistent 'export surplus' experienced by the economy of Bengal in the period from about 1630 to 1720, and the export of manufactures against the import of bullion. More recently, he has stated, while eschewing earlier quantitative estimates of several of these effects, that 'an increase in the volume of...trade would have been accompanied by an increase in real output and income in the economy, which was facilitated by the existence of a certain amount of slack in the system'.[6]

These arguments, like those subsequently espoused by Chaudhuri, in fact hark back to a second, minority, voice which appears in the writings of early nineteenth century political economists. Sometimes traced to the debate between Ricardo and T.R. Malthus, one of the frequently cited early protagonists of this alternate view was J.C.L. Simonde de Sismondi [1773–1842], who castigated Say and Ricardo on the grounds that they 'announced that whatever abundance might be produced, it would always find consumers'. Sismondi, who was what later came to be termed an 'under-consumptionist', argued that

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 219.
[4] K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660–1760*, p. 462.
[5] Cf. Om Prakash, 'Bullion for goods: international trade and the economy of early eighteenth century Bengal', *IESHR*, Volume XIII (2), 1976, pp. 159–87.
[6] The above article is incorporated in a modified form into Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630–1720*; for the relevant quotations, see pp. 239–40, 256–8.

such theories when put into practice 'cause that glut in the market, which at this time occasions the distress of the civilised world'.[7] In such circumstances, one can see that an external source of demand would help shore up an economy, which would otherwise be characterised by underemployed resources, or unsold produce.

It has been argued more than once by historians of economic thought that these views represent early precursors of what was eventually refined in more recent times by J.M. Keynes into a theory of income and employment. Based on the refutation of Say's law, this theory (in its most simple versions) portrays an economy of underemployed (or 'slack') resources, in which labour is, in particular, plentifully available. This, the prevalent underutilisation of capital, and the fact that the structure of the labour market is such as to ensure elastic labour availability at the current price of labour, means that the stimulus provided by increased demand will be met by increases in output, incomes and employment. Moreover, this can even take place without there being any significant effects on commodity prices. Now, an autonomous increase in demand could come from one of several sources. One could imagine that an increase by the State or some other body in its expenditures would be one such source; a growth in exports is certainly another. Not only this: Keynes argued, through the concept of the 'multiplier', that the eventual increase in incomes and output would be several times the initial increase in autonomous demand, on account of linkage effects in the economy, working through consumption.

Two features of this model need to be noted. First, it was originally intended as an explication of changes in the short-term rather than a theory of sustained and long-term change. Secondly, and this is a related point, it is predicated on the existence of certain *structural* features in the economies under consideration and is not a good approximation of all economies at all points in time. If one is to proceed from this to a theory of 'trade as an engine of growth', it is necessary to make the argument in the context of an economy characterised by something approximating what W.A. Lewis termed 'unlimited supplies of labour',[8] and perhaps of other complementary resources. Thus, while it is true that 'in the Keynesian framework of analysis, one could, in principle, derive the increase in income and

[7] See J.C.L. Simonde de Sismondi, *Political Economy and the Philosophy of Government*, London, 1847 (reprint New York, 1966), pp. 118–20.

[8] For instance, see W. Arthur Lewis, 'Unlimited labour: further notes', *The Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, Volume XXV, 1957, pp. 1–32.

output associated with a given incremental value of export surplus',[9] it would bear investigation whether this is in fact the apposite framework for treating the economy of pre-colonial India.

The model presented above of the impact of trade on the early modern Indian economy has usually been contrasted to another earlier one, espoused by the Aligarh school of historians, including Irfan Habib and Aziza Hasan. The initial statements by this school were founded on the same basic empirical characterisation of external trade in sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth century India as that of Om Prakash and Chaudhuri, namely of the export of manufactures against the import of bullion. However, they diverged radically in their conclusions. The principal argument of this school, in its first writings, was that the effect of bullion import into India in exchange for manufactures was manifested above all in the sphere of prices. Thus, as early as 1963, Habib posited a 'Price Revolution' in late sixteenth and seventeenth century India, consequent upon the sustained import of coinage metal into the economy.[10] This inflation was explained in terms of the simple transactions version of the quantity theory of money: if money supply (or bullion supply) in the economy increased, he argued, in the absence of an increase in the level of transactions, and assuming the velocity of money to be stable, a proportionate increase in prices would result.

This theory has more recently been reformulated in a manner which lays bare its theoretical roots. Mihir Rakshit has argued that in an economy which is fundamentally agrarian, where the sole source of demand for imports (here bullion) is the agrarian elite (or surplus class) and the sole export is manufactures, the effect of an increase in external demand for manufactures will be to generate a 'zero foreign trade multiplier' and solely price-effects.[11] This formulation, which like that of Om Prakash, has the advantage of analytical rigour, is based on a conception of the pre-colonial India economy which radically departs from that of Chaudhuri and Om Prakash. If theirs is a Keynesian world of under-employment and slack, his is redolent of the eighteenth century Physiocratic thought of François Quesnay. In such a world, agriculture is the sole productive activity, and

[9] See Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, p. 240.

[10] Cf. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556–1707*, Conclusion; Aziza Hasan, 'The silver currency output of the Mughal Empire and prices in India during the 16th and 17th centuries', *IESHR*, Volume VI (1), 1969, pp. 85–116; Irfan Habib, 'Monetary system and prices', in I. Habib and T. Raychaudhuri, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume I, pp. 360–81.

[11] See Mihir Rakshit, *The Labour-Surplus Economy: A Neo-Keynesian Approach*, New Delhi, 1982, Chapter 4.

manufactures are viewed as 'sterile' – in the sense of producing no surplus. The lynchpin of the economic system is the agricultural sector, and more specifically the manner in which agrarian surplus is used. In the vision of Quesnay's *Tableau Économique*, trade, comprising the export of manufactures and the import of bullion, can only lead to a redistribution of resources, not an increase in the product of the economy.[12]

Before turning to empirical questions, it is worth noting at least one other possible consequence of trade, noted by both Om Prakash and K.N. Chaudhuri. This is far more in the spirit of Adam Smith and Ricardo, and is defined by Om Prakash as 'a reallocation of resources in favour of the production of export goods', from an earlier situation of greater concentration in the production of other commodities. This familiar 'gains from trade' factor, would imply a benefit from trade in the terms of Smith and Ricardo, since, by expanding the extent of the market, the division of labour, and hence specialisation and efficiency, have been promoted.[13]

The question of which of these models, if any, is apposite to the context of the expanding trade of south India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be approached at both the theoretical and the empirical levels. In K.N. Chaudhuri's view, 'historians familiar with the description of events in the original sources will be aware that these questions and assumptions are not likely to go beyond plausible suggestions';[14] however, it is not a strategy of verification that has to be espoused after all, merely one of falsification. To put the issue somewhat differently, a theory on a region or economy-wide basis must of necessity remain provisional rather than proven; however, each of these models do predict certain outcomes in terms of the behaviour of certain variables, and these can be observed and compared with what the models predict.

In regard to the Indian economy in this period, credible quantitative data on key variables such as output, incomes, employment, and the sectoral divisions of these have yet to be discovered. The single

[12] See R.L. Meek, *The Economics of Physiocracy*, Cambridge, Mass., 1963; François Quesnay, *Quesnay's Tableau Économique*, ed. M. Kuczynski and R.L. Meek, London, 1972; for a precursor of this view, Richard Cantillon, *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* (1730–1734), ed. Henry Higgs, reprint New York, 1964, pp. 167, 237–9. For a recent reconsideration, also see Gianni Vaggi, 'The role of profits in physiocratic economics', *History of Political Economy*, Volume XVII (3), 1985, pp. 367–84.

[13] Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, p. 237; Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*, pp. 27–9.

[14] Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*, p. 219.

most important data set which exists therefore is that on prices, and, as we have seen prices are crucial to the predictions of both models under consideration. While the initial Aligarh school formulation suggested a substantial increase in prices, this has been denied by others. However, within the sphere of price adjustments, one can conceive of at least two sorts of effects: first, a general price rise in the domestic economy (helped by the importation of coinage metals against the export of manufactures), and secondly, a shift in the terms of trade in favour of the exported goods sector, which is to say of manufactures relative to agricultural products. It should be noted here that writers of the Aligarh School stress, by and large, the phenomenon of a general price rise in response to imports of bullion (in a manner reminiscent of the classical specie-flow mechanism) rather than changes in sectoral terms of trade; on the other hand Om Prakash has argued for a shift in terms of trade in favour of manufactures, without significant effects however on the general price level.[15]

These two alternative hypotheses are open to empirical testing, and the weight of evidence seems *not* to favour a hypothesis of general inflation. It is necessary of course to consider prices at a regional level, and, if one takes the period beginning from mid seventeenth century, price series from Goa (for rice), from Bengal (for rice and other agricultural commodities) and from other Indian regions, where largely silver and copper based currency systems existed, demonstrate that, while prices fluctuated considerably, no significant upward trend was visible up to mid eighteenth century.[16] It is arguable of course that the major price rise was in the period preceding these data, for instance in the 1620s when the price of silver fell with respect to copper and gold at Surat, but this hypothesis remains untested.[17] It should be noted too that, while prices of agricultural commodities seemed not to rise, there did seem to be a shift in sectoral terms of trade in period 1650–1750 in some regions, so that the price of manufactures relative to primary products rose in

[15] On Aligarh School views, see note 10 above; also Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, p. 237.

[16] For the Goa price series, see Teotonio R. De Souza, *Medieval Goa: A Socio-Economic History*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 172; on Bengal, see Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, pp. 252–3; on Surat, see Joseph. J. Brennig, 'Silver in seventeenth century Surat: Monetary circulation and the price revolution in Mughal India', in J.F. Richards, ed., *Precious Metals in the later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, pp. 477–96.

[17] For a survey of evidence on Surat, which comes to the same conclusion, see H.W. van Santen, 'De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620–1660', pp. 83–100.

northern India and Bengal in this period.[18]

What of southern India in our period? Unfortunately, price series are not available for the period before 1600 and there are only odd quotations from different locations in the records of the sixteenth century. Thereafter series begins only in 1607–8, with the first Dutch bills of lading extant. An analysis was hence carried out for the period 1608–50, with a view to examining the prices of three distinct sets of commodities in a single area, namely northern Coromandel.[19] For the purposes of analysis, the three commodity-groups considered were imports (spices, non-precious metals, benzoin, sulphur etc.), exported goods (four separate textile varieties, indigo, cotton yarn and steel), and agricultural products (namely rice and raw cotton). The prices were measured in a gold coin current at Masulipatnam, the gold *pagoda* or *hun*; it is worth bearing in mind that, as we have outlined in an earlier chapter, gold prices appreciated relative to those of silver in two phases – first, in the early 1620s, and then, in the late 1630s and early 1640s. Bearing in mind that the currency in the region was essentially gold and copper based, there seemed little meaning in measuring price changes in silver based units. The results that emerged from the analysis were as follows. First, among imports, the price of spices – and particularly cloves and nutmeg – declined throughout the 1630s and 1640s, from a peak in the period 1625–9. The fall was not remarked in the case of mace though. This price fall is best related to VOC policy, and inter-Company rivalry, rather than to the general price level in the economy. Further, if the Company intended to maintain a price level in *florins*, as the *florin* depreciated relative to the *pagoda*, the price in *pagodas* would tend to fall too. In the case of other imported goods, such as lead, vermilion, spelter, tin and quicksilver, a fall is visible only for a brief period in the 1640s, and they otherwise show no trend.

This brings us to copper, a crucial case since it was used for coinage. The price series is shown in Table 7.1[20] Once again, no real trend is visible, though it is conceivable that copper had begun to appreciate in value at the close of the period.

[18] Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, pp. 18, 102–108, 292–3; Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company*, pp. 237–8.

[19] The prices are drawn from diverse documents of the series *AR*, OB. The exceptions are early 17th century prices, taken from loose documents numbered VOC. 637, VOC. 638, VOC. 640, VOC. 641, VOC, 642, VOC. 643, VOC. 646 and VOC. 647.

[20] Copper prices are derived from lists of prices current at Masulipatnam, *AR*, OB, VOC. 1055 to 1187 (various volumes), as also *AR*, Collectie Geleynssen de Jonghe, 1.10.30, No. 230. When a range of prices was indicated, the mid-point has been taken.

Table 7.1 *Copper prices, pagodas/bahar, at Masulipatnam*, 1622–50

Year	Price	Year	Price
1622	55.0	1638	48.5
1624	47.5	1639	54.5
1627	50.0	1640	57.5
1628	45.5	1641	57.5
1629	50.0	1642	52.5
1632	45.0	1644	60.0
1633	50.0	1645	60.0
1634	50.0	1650	55.0
1636	50.0		

Note: 1 *bahar* = 480 Dutch ponds, or 240 kg.
Source: See note 20.

Where exportables are concerned, four textile items were studied, namely sailcloth, red *bethilles* of forty *hasta* length, white *bethilles* of twenty-four *hasta* and bleached *salampuris* of thirty-two *hasta*.[21] The first of these is a coarse variety, all the others being finer counts. It emerged that sailcloth prices tended to fluctuate between 0.16 and 0.24 *pagodas* a piece, with a mean value of 0.19 and no visible trend. Red *bethilles* of twenty-four *hasta* showed a slight decline in price over time, from 1.7 to 1.8 *pagodas* a piece early in the century, to 1.4 to 1.5 *pagodas* in the 1640s. Once again though, sharp price fluctuations tended to vitiate any firm conclusion. On the other hand, white *bethilles* of twenty-four *hasta* showed a slight upward trend in price, while the price per piece of bleached *salampuris* fluctuated through most of the period between 0.85 and 1.05 *pagodas*. Finally, examining price evidence relative to indigo and steel, two other items of export, once again no marked trend was observed though the price of indigo in particular shot up in the early 1630s agrarian crisis. These varied by and large between 17.5 to 18.0 *pagodas* the pack (of 150 Dutch ponds) for indigo, and from 1.5 to 2.0 *pagodas* for 100 clover-leaf shaped pieces of steel. In all these cases, price fluctuations were considerable, and even a particular consignment of indigo might contain packs valued in a range of 17.1 to 18.5 *pagodas*, though all originated from the Nagulvancha region.

In the case of agricultural products, data were much harder to come by. Such information as was available suggested sharp fluctuations

[21] *Bethilles*, apparently derived from the Portuguese *beatilha* (= veil), were fine, plain textiles much in demand in west Asia and Europe, and to a limited extent in western Indonesia. *Salampuris* were usually white cloth, with a red border, and in demand in a diversity of markets, particularly west Asia and Europe.

again, with the price of rice in the early 1630s, for instance, being 600 per cent of that in the late 1620s. White rice appears to have been valued in years of no serious crop failure at nine to ten *pagodas* per *gars* (or 3,600 lbs. avoirdupois) in the 1620s, 1630s and 1640s. This yields a price remarkably similar to the ones computed for the 1660–85 period for northern Coromandel by Brennig, suggesting a stability in rice prices over fairly long stretches of time.[22]

Thus, it appears reasonable to conclude that, in the period from roughly 1610 to 1650, there was no marked general rise in prices in the north Coromandel region, whether these prices are measured in gold or copper. Further, sectoral terms of trade between exportables and importables do not show any marked shift either. The foreign trade sector is a complex issue. To the extent that imports were of spices, silver, and goods such as sandalwood, whose prices fell both with respect to gold and exportables, foreign terms of trade shifted against importers. However, if imports were comprised largely of gold, copper, and other goods – as they were for most Asian merchants – there would be no marked deterioration. It might be useful to stress here once again, that, since the companies kept many of their accounts in terms of silver-based currencies (the Dutch in *florins*, the Danes and English in *rials*), the appreciation of gold relative to silver must have made it appear as though the prices of exportables from Coromandel was on the increase. For the south Indian economy, on the other hand, this consideration was largely irrelevant.

In sum, there appears little reason to conclude that sectoral terms of trade or general price levels witnessed a marked change from 1600 to 1650. Whether one can extend this to the preceding century must remain for the moment in the realm of speculation. However, one can proceed on the basis of the notion that external demand was not met solely by relative price adjustments in the local economy. As we shall argue though, this need not take us to the other extreme, of arguing that trade was an engine of growth in the economy.

Commercialisation, monetisation and agrarian expansion

In recent writings, some members of the Aligarh School, most notably Shireen Moosvi, have begun to move away from the position initially espoused by Irfan Habib and Aziza Hasan in respect of the price and quantity effects of trade in sixteenth and seventeenth

[22] Joseph Brennig, 'The textile trade of 17th century northern Coromandel', pp. 206–9.

century India. As I have shown elsewhere, Moosvi's methodology and use of empirical evidence is seriously flawed; however, her conclusions are of some interest.[23] She notes that the increase in prices in the course of the seventeenth century in northern India was probably insubstantial, and also concedes that 'price movements...in the central or core-region of the [Mughal] Empire during the seventeenth century were not [necessarily?] representative of the average or general changes for the Empire as a whole'. However, her claim that 'there do not exist any indices of prices of goods of mass consumption' is incorrect (as has been shown in an earlier paragraph); thus, the recourse to the relative price of gold and copper to silver as measures of the general price level is unnecessary, besides being theoretically incorrect.[24] The significant change in the stance now espoused by Moosvi is in the admission that total product, as well as the level of commercialisation and monetisation may have changed significantly over the period.[25]

Now, the continued import of coinage metal into an economy, without a substantial decline in its value relative to other goods, suggests three possibilities, which are not mutually exclusive. Either this metal was hoarded away, and hence had no effect on the general price level of the economy, or the economy's ability to absorb coinage metal without price effects increased on account of growing monetisation (and a decline in the *income-velocity* – as distinct from the transactions-velocity – of money), or the output of the economy increased so that the coinage in circulation had a larger volume of goods to support.[26] To begin with the first of these, the speculative motive, as well as the fact that gold had ornamental use, and was a store of value *par excellence*, would lead to at least a part of the

[23] See my review of Moosvi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire c. 1595: A Statistical Study*, Delhi, 1987, in *IESHR*, Volume XXV (1), 1988. For useful and wide-ranging comments, also see Frank Perlin, 'Money-use in late pre-colonial India and the international trade in currency media', in J.F. Richards, ed., *Imperial Monetary System in Mughal India*, pp. 232–373, especially pp. 343–57.

[24] Shireen Moosvi, 'The silver influx, money supply, prices and revenue-extraction in Mughal India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Volume XXX (1), 1987, pp. 47–94, especially pp. 83, 88, 91–2.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 81–3, 94.

[26] The suggestion that hoarding was an abnormal proclivity of the Indian economy is still frequently encountered in the literature. See, for example, Rudolph C. Blitz, 'Mercantilist policies and the pattern of world trade, 1500–1750', *The Journal of Economic History*, Volume XXVII (1), 1967, pp. 39–55. For the effects of structural change and monetisation on the income-velocity of money (to be distinguished from the transactions velocity), see Michael J. Driscoll and Ashok K. Lahiri, 'Income-velocity of money in agricultural developing countries', *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, Volume LXV (3), 1983, pp. 393–401.

imported metal leaving circulation. The other two possibilities considered, a growing level of monetisation, and the general expansion of agricultural and manufacturing output, could occur side by side as well.[27]

What can we independently conclude however on the last two possibilities that we have enumerated? When one turns to the question of growing commercialisation, a suggestion that is frequently encountered in the historiography is that the state's demand for fiscal dues was a major contributory factor.[28] There is reason to be sceptical about this, for, unless the state took a progressively increasing amount away as its fiscal claim, this stimulus would be more once-and-for-all than continuous. In point of fact, protagonists of this view are those who see commercialisation as solely a function of the Command Economy, and, as we have argued in an earlier chapter, there are good reasons for arguing for commercialisation 'from below' instead of solely forced commercialisation.

The related issue of monetisation is often treated in the historiography as congruent with commercialisation, both in respect of its causes and consequences. The causes are principally located once again in the state's growing demand for revenue *in cash*, which forces producers to use money for at least their revenue payments. This hypothesis is suspect logically. For, in order for growing monetisation to occur, there must be a continuous increase in either: (i) the proportion of output demanded as revenue, or (ii) the proportion of revenue taken in cash, or both. This is not at all unambiguously the case in south India in this period. In fact, one rapidly discovers from an examination of the region in the period that the most commercialised and monetised regions are also those where land revenue was taken in kind; conversely, land revenue was collected in cash in the least monetised and commercialised areas.[29] This would clearly

[27] Cf. Perlin, 'Money-use in late pre-colonial India', pp. 248–56, 268–9, *passim*.

[28] For instance, see T. Raychaudhuri, 'Inland trade' in Habib and Raychaudhuri, eds., *Cambridge Economic History of India*, I, pp. 327–8. A sceptical note on this question is struck in Frank Perlin, 'State formation reconsidered', p. 424 'For example, the relationship between peasants and their markets has tended to be seen merely as a subordinate function of the taxing activities of central authorities and as otherwise caught up in the ascriptive, ritualized sphere of *jajmani*'. Also *Ibid.*, pp. 464–5. For southern India, see B.A. Saletore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire*, Volume I, pp. 189–203, and N. Venkataramanayya, *Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagara*, pp. 194–245.

[29] Saletore, *Social and Political Life*, Volume I, pp. 189–203; David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, pp. 75–81.

militate against any notion that the form and extent of state land revenue demand was the sole (or even the most crucial) determinant of the extent of monetisation.

It is clear that, while the state may *not* play a crucial role in determining the extent of the commercialisation and of the monetisation of the economy, there are bound to be significant effects in the reverse direction. That is, the form and nature of the state's relationship with the production economy is bound to be affected by the prevailing levels of commercialisation and of money-use. Indeed, it may be argued that the growth of production for the market, and of money-use, would be typically accompanied by improvements in accounting, in the keeping of financial records, techniques which might in turn facilitate the growing fiscality of the state. A crucial role was played in this, we have argued in the last chapter, by a group of persons who, from the second half of the sixteenth century, emerge gradually into prominence, eventually assuming formidable proportions in the first half of the seventeenth century. These persons, whom we have termed 'portfolio capitalists', occupied a shadowy middle ground between state and producing economy, and combined a role in the fiscal structure with participation in inland trade, currency dealing, movements of bills of exchange, and even seaborne trade on a quite considerable scale. These persons, who hence held a mixed portfolio of assets, are a crucial element in two senses: not only do they help us characterise the political economy of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century and to differentiate it from what had gone before, they also form a crucial point of entry for an analysis of this economy.

We have already referred in earlier sections to how different schools of thought on the functioning of the pre-colonial Indian economy correspond fairly closely with different strands in classical economic thought. This is no coincidence, for each strand within Classical Political Economy was shaped by the experience of particular economic circumstances; thus, a range of ideas was thrown up, each of which was more or less appropriate to a given set of economic conditions. It is clear that, for our purposes, theories that were strongly shaped by the circumstances of nineteenth century trade and the Industrial Revolution – a situation in which the links between population and agricultural product, and agricultural incomes and manufacturing output, had been seriously undermined, and where considerable surplus labour existed – may not be the most apposite, reflecting as they do a set of economic interactions substantially different from those of Asia in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries.[30] Equally, the writings of the Physiocrats hold little appeal, based as they are on a single-minded devotion to agriculture, outright hostility to manufactures, and a certain contempt for trade-related issues.

There does exist however an intermediate school of thinking, often mistakenly identified with Physiocracy, but in fact distinct from it, and it is to this that we shall now turn. Identified above all with the writings of A.R.J. Turgot, and his *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses*, this thought forms an important bridge, both historically and doctrinally, between the Physiocrats and Smith. Divided into one hundred and one propositions, the *Réflexions* begin by a seemingly Physiocratic assertion of the preeminence of agriculture and the 'barrenness' or 'sterility' of manufacture. However, it soon emerges that, through his subtle understanding of monetary issues, Turgot has another object in mind. First, the two aspects of money – as a measure of value and as a store of wealth – are clearly separated (Propositions 77–9), as are the two prices it commands, the general price level, and the rate of interest. In a brilliant passage, Turgot then analyses the function of interest:

> The price of interest may be looked upon as a kind of level, beneath which all labour, agriculture, industry and commerce come to an end. It is like a sea spread over a vast area; the summits of the mounts rise above the waters and form fertile and cultivated islands. If this sea happens to flow back, in proportion as it descends, first the slopes, then the plains and valleys appear, and are covered with productions of every kind (Proposition 90).[31]

With this as an organising principle, Turgot has already laid bare the essence of what we have here termed portfolio capitalism. It is expressed by him (Propositions 83–8) in terms of 'five methods of employing capitals', and he argues that this portfolio of uses is bound together, with the individual 'employments' eventually 'establishing a kind of equilibrium amongst themselves, like that between two liquids of unequal gravity, which come into contact with each other at the base of an inverted siphon, of which they fill the two branches'[32]

[30] For an excellent discussion of these changes, see E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871: A Reconstruction*, Cambridge, Mass., 1981; for an earlier examination, stressing the relationship of these conditions to classical economic thought, Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York, 1944.

[31] See A.R.J. Turgot, *Écrits Économiques*, ed. Bernard Cazes, Paris, 1970; I have relied however on the critical edition and translation by P.D. Groenewegen, *The Economics of A.R.J. Turgot*, The Hague, 1977. For another perspective, see Gino Longhitano, *Turgot e il Pensiero Economico Francese del Settecento*, Catania, 1973.

[32] *The Economics of Turgot*, p. 87.

By this set of analogies, we shall see that Turgot provides us a powerful set of tools to analyse the functioning of different parts of the economy, and of the place of trade therein.

A reasonable starting point for our reformulation is the agricultural sector. Where the expansion of the agrarian economy of much of south India is concerned, broad indicators suggest an expansionary phase that begins in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, and continues for about three centuries, slackening off to the close of the seventeenth century. Thereafter, historians of southern India for the early eighteenth century often argue that the period is one of regression, and systemic crises, with a recovery that begins in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[33] One of the forms taken by the expansion is of the spread of cultivation into interior regions and interstices hitherto little cultivated. This is accompanied, as we have noted, by migratory movements, particularly in the phase 1400 to 1550. Thereafter, while the extent of long-distance migration declined, expansion continued.[34] It would seem moreover that the expansionary movement cannot be explained in terms of the widespread adoption of new crops, though Stein's suggestion that the Telugu migrants to black soil areas of Tamilnadu brought with them different techniques, which facilitated cultivation on hitherto untractable soils, is of importance. If we compare the situation to that in China between 1680 and 1800, when the adoption of New World crops enabled population and area under cultivation to boom (the former increasing over this century and a quarter at the phenomenal rate of 0.8 per cent per annum), expansion in the case at hand was clearly of far more modest dimensions.[35]

It is plausible then that the agrarian expansion was based in part on the improved productivity of an existing population, through the twin

[33] See for instance S. Arasaratnam, 'Indian merchants and the decline of Indian mercantile activity', *The Calcutta Historical Journal*, Volume VII (2), 1983, pp. 27–42; Bhaskar Jyoti Basu, 'The trading world of southern Coromandel and the crisis of the 1730s', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Bodh-Gaya, 1981, pp. 333–9; K. Rajayyan, *Administration and Society in the Carnatic, 1701–1801*, Tirupati, 1966.

[34] David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, pp. 16–17, 52–67; Burton Stein, 'The state, the temple and agricultural development: a study of medieval south India', *The Economic Weekly*, Annual Number, February 1961, pp. 179–87; Brian J. Murton, 'Some propositions on the spread of village settlement in interior Tamilnadu before 1750 AD', *The Indian Geographical Journal*, Volume XLVIII, 1973, pp. 56–72.

[35] Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*, tr. Siân Reynolds, London, 1981, pp. 44–6; Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, Stanford, 1973; Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, New Haven, 1987, pp. 24–5, *passim*.

means of the absorption and 'peasantisation' of hitherto marginal peoples, and through the more intensive and extensive use of existing technologies. Both of these are themes that recur in the inscriptional and other literature of sixteenth and seventeenth century south India. The 'mastery over forest tribes', and the 'destruction of jungles in the midst of the kingdom' are themes repeatedly harped upon in Krishna Deva Raya's *Amuktamalyada*; a further significant passage notes that 'even if the land [in the kingdom] is limited in extent, excavate tanks and canals and increase the prosperity of the poor cultivator by leasing him the land for low *ari* and *koru*, so that you may obtain wealth as well as merit'[36]. Equally, in writings over the past three decades, Burton Stein has repeatedly stressed the role of individual entrepreneurs as well as temples (who as much as individuals held in this period diversified portfolios of investment in agriculture and other activities) in promoting the agrarian expansion of the epoch.[37]

The missing dimension however is the demographic one. This is largely on account of the poor state of demographic studies for pre-colonial India, which is largely due in turn to the intractability of source material in this respect. Indeed, many of the most widely accepted estimates for Indian population in about 1600 have very little basis in documentation. W.H. Moreland's estimate of 100 million is based on untenable assumptions involving the translation of the sizes of armies which fought in particular engagements to population estimates; Kingsley Davis's reworking of this estimate is based on an arbitrary mark-up of the former number. A more recent estimate by Habib places the total population of the Indian sub-continent *circa* 1600 at between 140 and 150 million, based on three alternative modes of estimation, all equally suspect methodologically. Indeed, if we put his figure together with the best estimates for 1800 (which vary from 179 to 200 million), we are left with the puzzling fact of a compound growth rate over two centuries of from 0.10 to 0.14 per cent per annum, absurdly low by international comparisons or indeed from qualitative evidence.[38]

These estimates are for the most part made by historians of the

[36] *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, Volume III, p. 158.

[37] See the references in note 34, *supra*.

[38] In fact, 0.14 per cent per annum is the *highest* growth rate that Habib's estimate generates for the period 1600 to 1800. Indeed, Habib's methods, dependent as they are on arbitrary mark-ups and scale-downs to reach an apparently pre-determined conclusion inspire no more confidence than those of Moreland or Kingsley Davis. See Habib, 'Population', *Cambridge Econ. History of India*, I, pp. 163–71. In contrast, international comparisons suggest a long-term growth of 0.175 per cent in the long period 1300 to 1800 for world population. In the period 1600 to 1850 (treated as fifty year segments), the rate of growth of European population never fell below 0.24 per cent per annum. See Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*, pp. 41, 46–7. Finally,

Mughal Empire, who have frequently proceeded from deriving the population of the north Indian heartland to using a multiplicative factor to arrive at an all-India population. The population of south India thus computed, and corresponding to an India population estimate of 140 to 150 million, would yield a number from 23 to 27 million for 1600. However, as we have already noted, these estimates are clearly higher than the most plausible ones (those of Ashok V. Desai); it is appropriate to mention here too that Fernand Braudel in his recent survey regards Davis's 1600 figure (of 125 million) as improbably high in comparison with that of China in the same period, which leaves one with still less confidence in a figure that exceeds Davis's by 15 to 25 million.[39]

There are good reasons, it might be argued, to construct the estimate from another direction, namely to move from regional population to sub-continental population rather than the other way around. This is particularly in view of the fact that the major demographic breaks (and 'positive checks') are not the same all over India, as a simple survey of major famines in the period shows. Thus, the famine of the 1540s, of unusual severity and prolonged duration in south-eastern India, was scarcely of importance in the northern Indian heartland.[40] Conversely, while the famine and crop failure of the 1630s was most certainly felt in southern India, its severity was of a rather different order from that in Gujarat and northern India.[41] It may be argued with some conviction that the nature of demographic change in the pre-colonial Indian context (and even as late as 1920) cannot be understood *solely* with the aid of a notional 'average' rate of growth over long stretches. It is of central importance to separate phases of more rapid growth from those of less rapid growth, as also to note that the base population could be reduced by as much as 15 to 25 per cent in extremely severe famines.[42] Finally, given the state of the demographic art for pre-colonial India, it is of particular

for what remains the best estimate for the population of Akbar's empire, see Ashok V. Desai, 'Population and standards of living in Akbar's time – a second look', *IESHR*, Volume XV (1), 1978, pp. 53–79.

39 Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*. p. 46.

40 On the 1540s famine, see Gaspar Correia, *Lendas da Índia* (ed. M. Lopes de Almedia), Porto, 1975, Volume IV, pp. 87, 111, 131–2, 138; also see Elaine Sanceau, ed., *Cartas de D. João de Castro*, Lisbon, 1954, pp. 49–50.

41 W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 210–19.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 205–10. Also see A. Loveday, *The History and Economics of Indian Famines*, London, 1914, pp. 9–28; Paul R. Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal; The Famine of 1943–44*, Oxford, 1982, pp. 276–85, and for a general statement on the susceptibility of pre-industrial populations to famine Susan B. Hanley and Kozo Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change in preindustrial Japan, 1600–1868*, Princeton, 1977.

importance to combine conjecture with qualitative evidence on phases of more and less rapid growth.

In this context, we note that while a rate of growth of 0.14 per cent per annum may fit Habib's qualitative understanding of demographic change in the northern Indian heartland, it proves inadequate for southern India. If we conjecture instead that population growth in southern India may have been at somewhat over 0.3 per cent per annum in the period from mid sixteenth to late seventeenth century, and that it probably decelerated to below 0.2 per cent thereafter (using qualitative international comparisons), these assumptions would yield population figures for the area we have termed south India (which would include what was, in the colonial period, Madras Presidency, Travancore, Cochin, Mysore, Pudukkottai and some eastern districts of Hyderabad) of 10.7 million in 1550, 15.1 million in 1650, and would be consistent with a population estimate in 1800 of the order of 18 to 20 million.[43] These figures, which are hypothetical, and based on assumed ranges of growth rates, are made somewhat plausible by qualitative evidence of both agrarian expansion which was rather more rapid than could simply be explained by improvements in labour productivity, and by the substantial migration of the epoch. In the absence of detailed work on south Indian demography in the period, which might seek to highlight the nuances of sub-regional demographic differences – thus, population in Kerala apparently begins to expand somewhat earlier than in the rest of south India (in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), while the demographic reversal of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century is more marked in Andhra than Tamilnadu – we may content ourselves by noting that, at a qualitative level, demographic

[43] The figures 0.3 per cent and 0.2 per cent have been chosen on the basis of international comparisons for pre-modern populations, for which see note 27 above. They are based on the notion that only growth rates above 0.4 per cent per annum are truly unusual over sustained periods in such populations, that the range from 0.25 to 0.4 represents steady growth, and that from 0.10 to 0.25 slow growth. The region that we have termed south India, is roughly coterminous with the Visarias' southern region in their chapter on 'Population [1757–1947]', in Dharma Kumar, ed., *Cambridge Econ. History of India*, II, pp. 463–531. Assuming a population for the region as a whole of 20 million in 1800 (on the basis of Table 11, pp. 120–1, in Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India*, Cambridge, 1965, and C. Hayavadana Rao, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Bangalore 1927–30, 5 Volumes, Volume I, Chapter IX, pp. 354–449.), it is suggested that the following figures represent plausible orders of magnitude – 1550: 10.7 million, 1650: 15.1 million, 1800: 20 million, 1850: 29 million, 1871: 43 million. These are worked out on the assumption of a deceleration in growth of population from the close of the seventeenth century, in keeping with qualitative evidence, cited in notes 33 and 34 *supra*.

expansion forms a significant factor in understanding the processes of change in South India in this period.[44]

The overall structure of argument that one seeks to present would link the agrarian expansion of the late sixteenth to mid seventeenth centuries to the expansion in manufactures, of internal, coastal and overseas trade, and to processes of commercialisation and monetisation in a complex set of ways. These issues have been addressed on more than one occasion by Frank Perlin, in recent years: of particular importance in the present context is his rejection of a method which would centre around 'contrasting "indigenous" developments to those induced by foreign trade'[45]. The principal difficulties which one encounters with the analysis of the impact of external commerce on the pre-colonial Indian economy through the foreign trade multiplier are two. First, and at the more general level, they beg the question of processes of change *within* the pre-colonial Indian economy by reducing this economy to the status of merely reacting to stimuli provided by external (frequently European) trade. Typical examples of the use of such an approach are to be found in the writings of V.M. Godinho, who argues that the expansion in pepper production in south-western India (which was probably of over 200 per cent during the sixteenth century) was fundamentally on account of the growth of Portuguese demand, and in J.F. Richards's assertion that in northern Coromandel, 'Dutch and English initiative ... *created* an export of cotton cloth produced in rural industrial villages which soon reached a total estimated at nine million yards a year', whereas 'prior to this, southern Coromandel rather than the northern districts, had been the main zone of textile production for maritime export' (emphasis added).[46] Now, in the case of pepper production, it can be shown, even in the most financially prosperous years at the end of the sixteenth century, official Portuguese procurement rarely touched 10 per cent of the produce of south-western India; in fact, while

[44] Professor Burton Stein continues to express scepticism, however, concerning the extent of this demographic expansion (private communication to the author, dated 12 August 1987).

[45] Frank Perlin, 'Proto-industrialization and pre-colonial south Asia', *Past and Present*, 1983, pp. 30–95, especially p. 94.

[46] Cf. V.M. Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, Volume II, pp. 185–8; J.F. Richards, 'Mughal state finance and the pre-modern world economy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1981, especially p. 305. For a far more extreme view of the Portuguese stimulus to pepper production, see K.S. Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 213; however, I have shown elsewhere ('Trade and the regional economy of south India, c. 1550 to 1650', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Delhi, 1986, pp. 211–12, 227) that this is based on an incorrect interpretation of Portuguese documentation.

Portuguese exports hovered around 1,500 tonnes, the production in just six principalities around Cochin in 1605 was over 3,000 tonnes.[47] This rather undermines the hypothesis that Portuguese demand stimulated the substantial increase in pepper production which took place in the period. Equally, we have shown in an earlier chapter (Chapter 4) that the trade of Masulipatnam expanded dramatically in the last three decades of the sixteenth century, so that in 1605 – when the Dutch first arrived in northern Coromandel – the port was already a major exporter of textiles to northern and southern Burma, the Malay Peninsula and Aceh; the first half of the seventeenth century brought further expansion in Asian trade from the port, particularly to the Middle East. In a situation then when Asian trade from Masulipatnam to Burma alone in the late 1620s exceeded at a ratio of 2:1 the *entire* Dutch export from Coromandel in the same period, we may wonder at the basis for Richards's generalisation.

The second problem is a more specific and theoretical one. Is the multiplier, essentially a tool of short-run comparative static analysis, an appropriate one for dealing with changes which span decades? It is one thing to assert that pre-modern economies sometimes had – at specific junctures – slack in their productive resources, particularly at the trough of a short-duration economic cycle.[48] However, it is quite another matter, as M.N. Pearson recently notes, to believe that 'there was so much slack in the economy that over two hundred years a large increase in demand could be met, and vast new amounts of bullion absorbed'.[49] The central problem appears to be that the image of under-developed countries in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been conflated with that of the pre-colonial India economy: this is evident enough in K.N. Chaudhuri's remarkable assertion (cited earlier) that 'the multiplier effect ... was as evident in the pre-modern economy of Asia as it was in the

[47] On European demand for pepper, see C.H.H. Wake, 'The changing pattern of Europe's pepper and spice imports, ca. 1400–1700', *The Journal of European Economic History*, Volume VIII (2), 1979, especially pp. 380–7. For Portuguese trade in late sixteenth century Malabar, Francisco da Costa, 'Relatório sobre o trato de pimenta' (1605), in *DUP*, III, pp. 306–7, and Luíz de Figueiredo Falcão, *Livro em que se contem toda a fazenda e real património...Anno de MDCVII*, Lisbon, 1859, pp. 61–70.

[48] This argument for the stimulus provided by external demand at a trough in the short-term cycle is made, for example, by Le Roy Ladurie in the context of early modern Languedoc; Cf. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *The Peasants of Languedoc*, trans. John Day, London, 1974.

[49] M.N. Pearson, 'Merchants and States', paper presented to the conference on *The Rise of Merchant Empires* (changing patterns of long-distance trade, 1350–1750), Minneapolis, 9–11 October 1987, page 20 of the paper.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries'. But this is precisely the crux of the issue, since trade in our period was *not* what it appears to be in recent times, a solution to an equilibrium trap of chronically underemployed resources, low incomes and low demand.

On the contrary, there were several other ways in which external trade interacted with the economy of southern India. There were significant qualitative effects, for, as Adam Smith might have foreseen, the growth of trade and the consequent extension of the market aided spatial differentiation, and sub-regional specialisation in production. By the mid seventeenth century, the southern Indian economy was a fairly sophisticated one by pre-modern standards, and a measure of this sophistication is the extent of interdependence between productive areas – and between South India taken as a whole and other regions. But this growth in trade was not wholly exogenous or abitrary, nor indeed was it fundamentally predicated on the whims of particular European entities in its quantitative dimensions. Instead, it depended centrally on an expansion of the internal economy which took place side by side, and which was in all probability powered by agrarian and demographic expansion. Fernand Braudel, generalising about much of the Old World, has declared: 'Between the fifteenth and eighteenth century if the population went up or down, everything else changed as well. When the number of people increased, production and trade also increased'.[50] He goes on to qualify this statement, which might otherwise seem the sheerest demographic determinism, and we must do the same, the more so on account of the present unsatisfactory state of demographic evidence. Moreover, to assert the unqualified dominance of 'indigenous' factors over the 'external sphere' would be an exercise in futility. It would appear far more sound to state that had external demand grown in the absence of an economy made flexible by autochthonous expansion, the results would have been very different from what we have observed in our period. Equally though, the character of change in the domestic economy would have taken a rather different form, in the absence of the opportunities provided by expanding trade.

In this entire process, a role of central importance is played by those who held the middle ground between external trade and agrarian structure, and consequently between what the classical economists might have termed the 'different employments of capital'. That such a middle ground was there to be held is itself of

[50] Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*, p. 32.

significance, and tells us a good deal about the economy. By mediating between external trade, internal trade, manufacture and agrarian production – in particular through that important early seventeenth century institution, the revenue-farm – the portfolio capitalists inevitably operating each at a different scale, epitomise the symbiosis of external trade and autochthonous expansion which in turn characterises the latter half of the period under consideration.

Conclusion

It has already been seen that, in the period up to 1650, the principal area of growing trade from southern India was the intra-Asian nexus, but it is also necessary when dealing with the larger period extending to 1750 to distinguish the phases of growth of the intra-Asian trade from phases when trade to Europe grew rapidly. Where intra-Asian trade was concerned, the second half of the sixteenth century was a particularly rapid growth phase, largely on account of the development of the Bay of Bengal commercial system, involving south-eastern India. The subsequent half-century, from 1600 to 1650, saw the Companies, and particularly the VOC, expanding their share in the trade from Coromandel to south-east Asia, but this seems to have been at the cost of Asian and private Portuguese merchants. However, even in this period, the broad expansion of Asian markets seems to have continued, albeit at a slower pace than in the late sixteenth century. The growth of intra-Asian trade probably began to flag towards the close of the seventeenth century; one recent study notes in this period the 'decline in the general profitability of the intra-Asian trade'.[51] This is simultaneously the period when European private traders make substantial inroads into intra-Asian (or 'country') trade, a process that is further accelerated in the course of the first half of the eighteenth century. In contrast to this picture, the trade from southern India to Europe picked up only in the second half of the seventeenth century, and it is here that the Europeans' real contribution lies. Thus, to locate the growth of commerce from southern India squarely in the seventeenth century, and to attribute it to the presence of the Companies constitutes an incomplete understanding of phases of growth in different circuits, and their overall effect on commerce.

It has been suggested in this study that the emphasis on external demand stimuli as causing the growth of manufacturing and

[51] See Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and Bengal*, p. 258.

agricultural production in southern India in the period 1500 to 1650 might well be misplaced. An alternative, more complex, understanding of the interaction of trade and internal economy is called for, one that would seek to order causality neither purely from trade to internal economy, nor vice-versa. A central place must instead be given in any model to the dialectic of interaction; thus, neither the pure Physiocratic nor the purely exogenous demand-based explanations prove adequate. In understanding the relationship between domestic production and external trade then, we may have no better guide than Turgot, who stressed that while 'the different uses of capital' – in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce – 'produce ... very unequal products, this inequality does not prevent them from having a reciprocal influence on each other, nor from establishing a kind of equilibrium amongst themselves'.[52] In the course of time, this would of course be a shifting equilibrium, but it is the process that should be our central concern.

[52] Turgot, 'Reflections', Proposition 88, in Groenewegen, ed., *The Economics of Turgot*, p. 87.

Conclusion

All history, it may be said, is comparative history, since the historian by using a vocabulary enmeshes himself instantly with *other* contexts in which the same vocabulary has been used. It is merely that some historians approach this question with a greater degree of self-consciousness than others; Frank Perlin, whose writings reflect an attempt to grapple with many of these problems, concludes one of his essays by noting that 'the only means available to us for reexamining the problem of transition in the early modern period ... [are] on the one hand, comparison, and on the other, an open frontier of relevance, which is to say the ruthless pursuit of the discipline of context'[1]. However, as a 'colonised' historiography, one largely conducted in a language which is itself a product of the colonial episode, and frequently called upon to 'justify' itself in the terms of other historiographies, the body of writing on Indian historical problems has usually found itself in the position of an arena where ideas and models derived from other – usually European, more recently African – contexts are 'applied' willy-nilly. In this, it is not unique: much the same can be said of another 'colonised' historiography, that on south-east Asia.[2]

At the same time, practitioners of history are uneasily aware, while dealing with south and sout-east Asia in the period after 1500, that the process of *parallel* comparisons with western Europe in the period is well-nigh absurd, and can only bring forth the same dichotomies of success/failure, whether cast in terms of mentalities, material conditions, state policies, or – as has been more recently the case – a reversion from the parallel to the mirror-image, and hence the recourse to core-periphery interaction models.[3]

To close this extended essay on the place of external commerce in

[1] Frank Perlin, 'Proto-industrialization and pre-colonial south Asia', especially pp. 94–5.

[2] Cf. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Aspects of state formation in south India and southeast Asia, 1500–1650', *IESHR*, pp. 357–77.

[3] Perlin, 'Proto-industrialization'; for a reversion to the comparative approach in terms of 'why both the Chinese and Indian states did not pursue the sorts of policies

the historical processes of south India between 1500 and 1650, it seemed of interest to append to the body of it, a brief discussion of how these developments compare with others, not in Europe, or even Africa, but within the more limited ambit of south-east and east Asia. Many of the themes which seem to hold the key to the history of southern India in the period after 1500 seem equally to have animated Chinese and south-east Asian processes – agrarian expansion, population increase and migration, a substantial expansion in foreign trade in certain phases interspersed with others of trade depression, and finally a growth of internal trade, commercialisation and monetisation. These images are to be encountered in the context of early modern Java, as indeed when one deals with China in the late Ming and early Qing periods, even if the timing of specific processes tends to differ.[4]

However, historians of China and south-east Asia have been noticeably reluctant to pose the question of the links between external commerce and the more general trends in economy and polity, in a comparative perspective which includes within its ambit India. The tributary model within which early Qing monarchs dealt with the question of external commerce, with its image of Chinese 'centrality, superiority and self-sufficiency', was, it is now argued, at least partly an illusion, and even those who persist in seeing maritime regions and maritime commerce as 'peripheral' note that a study of these questions 'can enormously enrich our understanding of late Imperial China'.[5] What then are the processes being discussed? The context appears to be one of a substantial expansion in external commerce from roughly 1570 to 1620; there follows a contraction, and then from the late seventeenth century on a nearly continuous process of expansion, so that 'seaborne trade, recovering

which contributed to development in England', see M.N. Pearson, 'Merchants and states', Paper presented to the conference on *The Rise of Merchant Empires*, Minneapolis, 9–11 October 1987.

[4] For a preliminary comparative statement, see C.A. Bayly, 'States and empires, 1760 to 1830', *Itinerario*, Volume XI (1), 1987; on Java, see Luc Nagtegaal, 'The Dutch East India Company and the relations between Kartasura and the Javanese north coast, c. 1680 to c. 1740', in J. van Goor, ed., *Trading Companies in Asia, 1600–1830*, Utrecht, 1986, pp. 51–81, as also Peter Carey, 'Waiting for the "Just King"', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume XX (1), 1986.

[5] Cf. John E. Wills, 'Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang: themes in peripheral history', in J.D. Spence and J.E. Wills, eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China*, New Haven, 1979, pp. 201–38, especially pp. 204–5. Also see Wills, *Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K'ang Hsi, 1666–1687*, Cambridge, Mass., 1984, pp. 1–37.

from the seventeenth century contractions, expanded to unprecedented volumes in the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'.[6] It should be stressed that this was an expansion which was not purely and simply predicated on European Company commerce, for a substantial role was played by the Chinese junk trade from ports on the south-east coast.

We discover, moreover, that, because of a 'favourable net balance of trade', the phases of commercial expansion in China were accompanied by substantial annual inflows of silver bullion and other coinage metal, which, according to W.S. Atwell's authoritative formulation on the question, 'played an important role in determining the pace and, to a certain lesser extent, the direction of the country's economic development', between roughly 1530 and 1650, as well as in later phases of commercial expansion.[7] These views are somewhat removed, it would appear, from an earlier orthodoxy which focussed on the massiveness of the Chinese economy, and the consequent necessarily insignificant role of external trade; these earlier views were more in keeping with official articulations of the role of external commerce in the early Qing period itself.

Enough has been said in the preceding paragraphs to suggest significant parallels – both historical *and* historiographical – between early modern India and China. It now remains to speculate briefly on what a bringing together of the two might achieve. In the Indian historiography, we have noted the existence of clearly articulated, and widely differing views on the question of the relationship between external commerce and the agrarian and manufacturing economy. Where China is concerned, even those who have hinted at a substantive relationship – in particular through the medium of bullion imports – have rarely gone beyond generalities. Atwell, for instance, argues that imports of silver played an important role in late Ming China by 'facilitating rapid monetary growth and greatly enhancing the efficiency of exchange', and that equally, in the eighteenth century, economic expansion was 'supported by large-scale imports of foreign silver'.[8] Yet, he also notes that the bullion import of the sixteenth century caused a great inflationary spiral, and

[6] Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, New Haven, 1987, pp. 30–2. Also see Thomas Metzger, 'The State and Commerce in Imperial China', *Asian and African Studies*, Volume VI, 1970.

[7] See William S. Atwell, 'International bullion flows and the Chinese economy, c. 1530–1650', *Past and Present*, Volume XCV, 1982, pp. 68–90.

[8] *Ibid.*, as also Michel Cartier, 'Les importations de métaux monetaires en Chine: Essai sur la conjuncture chinoise', *Annales E.S.C.*, Volume XXXVI, 1981, pp. 454–66.

that, equally, the choking off of these imports in the seventeenth century had serious deflationary consequences (thus contributing in his view to the fall of the Mings). In sum then, in the Chinese case, significant *price* effects seem to be posited too, a rather different approach from the simple 'foreign trade multiplier' espoused by some writers in the Indian context.[9]

At the same time, Susan Naquin and Evelyn Rawski, in a recent survey of Chinese society in the eighteenth century, have noted a substantial process of 'agricultural commercialisation and diversification', which they suggest was 'initially stimulated by a shift in the focus of foreign trade from the Central Asian caravans to the ports of the southeast coast', and go on to argue that 'the impact of foreign demand on the society and economy of the areas producing export goods [was] ... direct and important'.[10] Although the problem has, once again, not been posed by them in terms as explicit as those one perceives in the Indian historiography, it is amply evident that theirs is a conjunctural vision involving population growth and agrarian expansion, a consequent growth in demand for money metals, which at the same time serves to grease the wheels of increased market activity. Periods of low availability of monetary metals through imports are characterised, as they see it, by price depressions, as also by a slowing down of quantitative growth. Equally, the broad characterisation of the eighteenth century which they espouse is of simultaneous output expansion *and* inflation, wherein prices roughly double over a hundred year period.

Thus, at least at one level, the conundrum of economic change in different parts of early modern Asia appears to be characterised by parallel features, and it is evident that any general formulation based on evidence from one context would have implications for an approach to any other. This is not to gainsay the importance of specific, differentiating features in each of these economies and societies, which serve in turn to define the limits of comparison. India – without a unifying language, politically fragmented in the absence of even a notional unitary political order, and with a coastline which, when taken in ratio to its land mass, yields a far higher index than in the case of China – obviously emerged from this period with a set of outcomes that were in many ways unique. Yet,

[9] On these issues, also see Atwell's more recent essay 'Some observations on the "Seventeenth-Century Crisis" in China and Japan', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume XLV (2), 1986, pp. 223–44. The price evidence in the Chinese case is somewhat fragile (as with India), but see Yeh-chien Wang, 'The secular trend of prices during the Ch'ing period (1644–1911)', *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies* (Hong Kong), Volume V (1), 1972, pp. 347–68.

[10] Naquin and Rawski, *Chinese Society*, pp. 102–5, 221–3.

whether one chooses to deal with issues at the level of broad economic interactions, or of specific features, there are some tantalising possibilities inherent in comparison. One notes, for example, John Wills's comment that, while in the 'mainstream of Chinese tradition', the three types of 'merchant', 'mediator' and 'military commander' were separate, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, 'the three were occasionally and very powerfully combined in one person', as well as other recent writings which argue that, while the Confucian ideals which apparently animated the Chinese state may have been anti-commercial, the relationship between the state and commerce (both in the hands of local merchants, and in the hands of Europeans) was far more complex.[11]

One of the central arguments of this study has been that such specific developments in the triangular nexus between state, producing economy and external commerce are intimately related, on the one hand, to an internal and autochthonous groundswell, and, on the other, to opportunities provided by the very process of interaction with other economies. It is all too easy, whether while dealing with the history of India, China or Java in the period from 1500 to 1750, to fall back on one of two extreme positions: one, wherein the rest of the world is an endless source of the *deus ex machina*, the other of a pristine set of Asian worlds, each enormously resistant to external contact (until the thunderclap of colonialism). As the cautious interpreter of European documentation from this period discovers though, these documents – the product of self-absorbed minds, which saw the world as revolving around themselves – have a substantial capacity to produce paradoxical results. Interpreted literally, they suggest that external sources – foreign demand, external trade, imported firearms – are responsible for all that is new in Asia over these two and a half centuries of history. When stood on their head, they can only ratify the picture that van Leur espoused a half-century ago, of self-absorbed and self-contained Asian societies and economies, already at so high a level of achievement, that external contact could by definition offer them nothing. But neither of these is true. The real paradox is that the self-seeking, self-justifying and self-centred writings of the Europeans in early modern Asia should still prove so rich in delineating an epoch in its totality, with the Europeans themselves given their due, not less but most emphatically not a whit more.

[11] Wills, 'Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang', p. 234; also see Ng Chin-Keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683–1735*, Singapore, 1983, pp. 215–18.

A NOTE ON CURRENCY AND WEIGHTS

Since a diversity of currencies and weights have been used in the course of this book, it seemed best to clarify the issue in a note. There are broadly three heads under which we can categorise both weights and currencies: (i) Indian, (ii) European, (iii) Indo-Portuguese. Weights have the problem of diverging across space; thus the *bahar* has a different value in different places. By and large, they do not seem to have varied over the period. In the case of currencies, variations over time have to be taken into account as well.

Weights

The basic unit, *bahar* had the following values in different locations: Honawar: 201.96 kg.; Bhatkal: 212.058 kg. (usually), 192.78 kg. (for sugar); Cannanore: 205.63 kg.; Calicut: 208.15 kg.; Cochin and Kollam: 166.27 kg. (here the *khandi*, used to measure rice, was distinct from the *bahar* and weighed 214.267 kg.); Kayal: 211.14 kg.; Nagapattinam and Pulicat: 211.14 kg. (mid sixteenth century), but 229 kg. in the seventeenth century; Masulipatnam: 238 kg.; Bimilipatnam: 247 kg.

In all locations where the *maund* or *man* was in use, it was 1/20 of a *bahar*. In Coromandel, *bahar* and *khandi* were used indifferently. Finally, rice was sold in seventeenth century Coromandel by the *parra*, roughly 24 kg. in Pulicat and 22.5 kg. in north Coromandel. Other weights that are encountered include the Dutch pond (0.494 kg.), and the Portuguese *quintal* (heavy quintal = 58.7 kg.; light quintal = 51.4 kg.).

Currency

No comprehensive study exists to date of the currency systems in south India in the period under consideration. My own discussion is based on European documentary material from the period, and in particular António Nunez, 'O Livro dos Pesos, Medidas e Moedas

[1554]', in R.J. de Lima Felner, ed., *Subsídios para a história da Índia Portugueza*, Lisbon, 1868.

Partial surveys include:

P.M. Joshi, 'Coins current in the kingdom of Golconda', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Volume V (1), June 1943, pp. 85–95.

H.K. Sherwani, *History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty*, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 466–70, and notes.

R.S. Panchamukhi, 'The coinage of the Vijayanagara dynasties', in *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume*, Dharwar, 1936, pp. 101–17.

S.H. Hodivala, 'The Golconda rupee of Shah Jahan', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (N.S.), Volume XII, 1917 (Supplement).

V.M. Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, 2nd edition, 4 Volumes, Lisbon, 1981–4, Volume I.

For a brief overview: Frank Perlin, 'Changes in the production and circulation of money in seventeenth and eighteenth century India: An essay on monetisation before colonial occupation', in E. van Cauwenberghe and F. Irsigler, eds., *Minting, monetary circulation and exchange rates*, Trier, 1984, pp. 323–60.

The indigenous currency systems of the period in south India were, almost without exception bi-metallic and silver coinage was not uttered. The basic units were the *varaha*, a large gold coin of a high degree of purity (also known as *hun*, and *pagoda*, a half *varaha* being termed a *pratapa*, or *pardao de fanões*), and the *panam* (also termed *fanum, fanão*), a gold coin with a large copper alloy. In the mid sixteenth century, the *panam* or *chakram* of Nagapattinam and Pulicat were both 1/10th of a *pratapa*. *Panams* of lower value circulated at Kayal, Calicut, Cananur and Cochin; only the *raja panam* of Kollam was worth more than that of Coromandel. In the early seventeenth century, the *varaha* to *panam* exchange rate varied from place to place on account of a multiplicity of mints. Further confusion was on account of the existence of small and large *panams*. In seventeenth century Pulicat, one *varaha* was worth 15–16 large and 24 small *panam*; in Masulipatnam in the same period, a *varaha* was worth 12 *panam*.

Indo-Portuguese coinage on the other hand was largely silver based, and can be understood in terms of a fictitious unit *reis*. Thus, the *Xerafim* = 300 reis; *tanga* = 60 reis; *Cruzado* (up to the 1560s) = 360 reis; *cruzado* (post-1570 and in the early seventeenth century) = 400 reis. The *rial* of eight was reckoned at 360 reis, as were

the silver *pardau* and the *São Tomé*. The relationship between these coins and the copper coin *bazaruco* varied; in the early seventeenth century, 1 *tanga* = 75 *bazarucos*.

Turning to other coinage of the seventeenth century, the *rial* of eight was worth 2.5 Dutch *florins* (or guilders). The Mughal rupee was worth 0.5 *rials* of eight.

Finally, to allow these currency systems to be reconciled, some equivalents are needed. These can be problematic, since changing gold: silver ratios would cause the equivalences to change. Two conversions may be given, for mid sixteenth and mid seventeenth century, respectively. In c. 1550, the following values for *panams* obtained: *panam* (galeão) of Kayal = 22.5 reis; *panam* of Calicut = 25.7 reis; *panam* of Cananur = 26.66 to 27.15 reis; *raja panam* of Kollam = 40 reis; Cochin *panam* = 21.66 reis; Nagapattinam and Pulicat *panam* = 28.8 to 29.4 reis.
Pratapa of Pulicat (c. 1550) = 290 reis.
Varaha of Pulicat (c. 1650) = 4.2 *florins* = 605 reis.
Varaha of Masulipatnam (c. 1650) = 4.5 *florins* = 650 reis.

GLOSSARY

Port. = Portuguese; Skt. = Sanskrit.

adigar: Port. from Skt. adhikāri. Used to denote local governor in southeastern India, e.g. Tanjavur.
agrahāram: Brahmin settlement.
alvará: Decree of the Portuguese King or Viceroy valid for a limited duration.
Arioles: Coastal community in central Malabar hostile to the Portuguese.
armada: Port. fleet.
bahār: Unit of Weight, with differing values in different parts of southern India. Sometimes used indifferently with Khandi, e.g. on Coromandel.
bañjāra: Intinerant community engaged in transporting bulk goods by pack oxen in the Deccan plateau etc.
bazaruco: Indo-Portuguese Copper coin, in the early seventeenth century worth 1/75 of a tanga.
bethille: Fine plain textile, largely manufactured in northern Coromandel and in the Deccan. From Port. Beatilha = veil.
capado: Port. eùnuch.
capitão-mor: Port. Captain-Major.
carreira: Port. Navigational route usually followed by Crown shipping; e.g. Carreira da Índia = Cape Route.
cartaz: literally card, or poster. In fact, used to denote a pass enabling the vessel carrying it to sail on a specified route. Often carried details of captain's name, owner's name, tonnage, number of guns etc.
Casa da Índia: Port. literally India House. An organ of state at Lisbon in charge of trade on the Cape Route.
casado: Port. married man. Used to denote settlers at Portuguese fortresses, and at Indian Ocean littoral ports who were of Portuguese origin, or owed allegiance to the Portuguese Crown.
chūlias: Malay term; denotes Muslims from south-east India.
cruzado: Portuguese coin, worth 400 reis.
daḷavāy: Tamil; head of army or of administration in a Nayaka kingdom.
Estado da Índia: The Portuguese state of India comprising Portuguese 'possessions' from Moçambique to the Moluccas; a usage common from the late sixteenth century, when it replaces the phrase "as partes da Índia".
factura: Port. also used in seventeenth-century. Dutch documents. Bill of lading.

fidalgo: Port. Literally son of a somebody.
florin: Or guilder. The Dutch monetary unit in the seventeenth century, further sub-divided into stuivers and penningen.
fusta: or foist. A small armed vessel.
Guinees: Or guinea linen. Synonymous with English longcloth.
havaldār: Used in the Sultanate of Golconda to designate governors of limited areas.
hūn: or hoṇṇu. A gold coin synonymous with varāha and pagoda
inām: land held on privileged tenure. An eighteenth century usage.
jihād: Islamic holy war.
kampong: Malay; settlement or quarter of town.
kāvaḍi: Tamil; bamboo arrangement of basket and poles to carry loads.
keling: Malay; also Kling, or (in Port.) quelim. Indian merchant in south-east Asia of Tamil or Telugu origin. Conventionally traced to Kaliṅga.
khaṇḍi: Unit of Weight, of varying value in different parts of India. In Masulipatnam equals 240 kg.
kōmaṭṭi: Telugu commercial caste, intermediaries in textile purchases in the seventeenth century.
kōṭwāl: Official in charge of law and order in a town.
ladroeira: Port. literally thieves' den. Used to designate Mapilla strongholds on Malabar.
maund (māṇ): Unit of Weight, usually 1/20 of a bahar. In Masulipatnam, equal to 12 kg.
mestiço: Port. of mixed blood, Eurasian.
Mīr Jumla: Head of revenue administration in Golconda and Bijapur.
Misericórdia: Santa Casa de Misericórdia = Holy House of Mercy. Charitable institution found in all sizeable Portuguese official or unofficial settlements. Often with substantial financial wherewithal.
mouros: Port. Muslims. Hence the Dutch term 'Mooren' and English 'Moors', to describe all Muslims.
muri: Plain cloth from southern Coromandel.
nau: Port. Large ship, carrack.
naveta: Port. Smaller vessel than nau.
navio de remo: Port. Oared ship, but smaller than a galley.
overlooper: Dutch. for deserter. Distinct however from renegade, since the overlooper went over to another European power.
pagoda: Gold coin, synonymous with hūn in Golconda, and Varāha in Vijayanagara. To be found with minor variations all over southern India.
pāḷaiyakkārar: Chieftain based at a fortified place (or pāḷaiyam).
paṇam: Small gold coin, with substantial alloy of copper, worth from 1/15 to 1/20 of a pagoda.
pardau: Port. From pratāpa, used to denote an Indo-Portuguese coin worth 360 reis, as also used in the sixteenth century indifferently with pagoda.
pardesi: Foreigner. Used for middle eastern Muslims in the ports of south-west India.
páreas: Port. tribute.

percallas: Plain cloth from north Coromandel.
pintados: Painted or printed cloth from central Coromandel.
provedor dos defuntos: Port. Official in charge of gathering together and remitting to the heirs the effects of a deceased Portuguese or vassal of the Portuguese Crown, for which he received a percentage of the effects thus remitted.
qāfila: Or cāfila. Inland or coastal convoy.
quintais: Port. weight. The heavy quintal was 58.7 kg., the light quintal 51.4 kg.
regedor-mor: Port. Chief regent.
rendeiro: Port. rentier or revenue-farmer. Identical with Dutch pachter.
rial of eight: Silver coin worth 360 reis and 2.5 Dutch florins.
roteiro: Port. rutter or pilot. Book with sailing instructions and navigational directions.
Sar-i-Khail: High revenue official in Golconda and Bijapur, second only to the Mīr Jumla.
sar-samaṭu: Governor of a substantial territory in Golconda, usually resident at a major fortress-town.
soldado: Port. Soldier. Used in contradistinction to casado.
solteiro: Port. Bachelor: Rare usage, to denote peripatetic or unsettled residents of a settlement of the Estado da Índia.
tanga: Indo-Portuguese silver coin worth 60 reis.
tōṇi: A boat of shallow draught used to load and unload ships, or for coastal navigation.
vaḍuga: Tamil. Literally northerner. Used to denote Telugu migrants into Tamil country. Hence the Port. badaga.
varāha: Gold coin, synonymous with pagoda. Etymological roots in the avatāra of Visnu are doubtful.
viagem: Port. voyage. Used to denote a navigational route on which a concession was given, and was thus a counterpart of carreira.
xerafim: Indo-Portuguese silver coin. Possibly derives its name from Persian ashrafi. Worth 300 reis.
zambuco: Port. From Arabic sambuq. Coastal sailing craft.

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